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ABSTRACT

This book discusses tricks for answering questions on the Graduate Management Admission Test (GMAT). The tricks are based on an analysis of 20 editions of the GMAT which have been made public pursuant to New York's Truth in Testing Law. Sample GMAT questions published by the Graduate Management Admission Council are referenced to exemplify the tricks' applications on actual GMAT items. Topics in this book include: (1) a description of the test development process that is involved in compiling an actual GMAT; (2) a detailed analysis of the structure of each section of the GMAT; (3) an analysis of answer options; (4) a description of tricks for answering specific types of items; and (5) examples of the tricks from published material and commentaries. Each suggested trick is accompanied by a frequency breakdown, which provides specific data about the trick's effectiveness on 20 previously disclosed editions of the GMAT. There is a special chapter on test bias which focuses on bias against minorities, women, and low income applicants. Suggestions for avoiding test bias are offered, with examples from published materials. (KA)

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# THE GMAT EXPOSED:

## TRICKS FROM 20 GMATs

by David M. White

Testing for the Public

Berkeley, California

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1308 Peralta
Berkeley, California 94702

# Testing for the Public

## Announces the Publication of

# THE LSAT EXPOSED: TRICKS FROM 12 LSATs

by David M. White

This book makes public, for the first time, Tricks for answering questions on the Law School Admission Test. The Tricks are based on an analysis of twelve editions of the LSAT which have been made public pursuant to New York's Truth in Testing Law. Sample LSAT questions published by the Law School Admission Council are referenced to exemplify the Tricks' applications on actual LSAT questions. 96pp.

Topics included in this book include:

A description of the test development process that is involved in compiling an actual LSAT.

A detailed analysis of each section of the LSAT. This analysis includes a description of the structure of the section, an analysis of answer options, a description of Tricks for answering specific types of questions, examples of the Tricks from published materials, and commentary on the Tricks.

Each Trick is accompanied by a Frequency Breakdown, which provides specific data about the Trick's effectiveness on 12 previously disclosed editions of the LSAT.

A special chapter on Test Bias—with particular focus on test bias against minorities, women, and low income applicants. Suggestions for avoiding test bias are offered, with examples from published materials.

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TESTING FOR THE PUBLIC is continuing its research into the Graduate Management Admission Test. Some of this research depends upon an analysis of actual answer sheets from test applicants.

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**Please send a copy of your answer sheet** to TESTING FOR THE PUBLIC. It will be included in confidential research conducted about the GMAT.

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**THANK YOU for assisting TESTING FOR THE PUBLIC in its research!**

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I am deeply indebted to a number of individuals for their encouragement and support during the preparation of this book. A few people deserve a special thanks for their contributions.

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HERE'S MY THEORY

## CHAPTER 1. HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

### A. SAMPLE TESTS FROM THE GMAC.

This book contains **no GMAT questions.** It refers to sample questions provided in published GMAT materials.

You should **immediately** order the following publications from ETS, if you do not already have a copy:

1) **GMAC 85-86 Bulletin of Information.** This book is available from graduate schools of management. You may also obtain a copy for free by writing to:

**GMAT Bulletin**
Graduate Management Admission Test
Educational Testing Service
Box 966
Princeton, NJ 08541

2) **Offical Guide to GMAT.** This book is available in bookstores, or pre-paid from ETS.

The check or money order should be payable to Graduate Management Admission Test for one of the following amounts:

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|---|---|
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Educational Testing Service
Box 966-D
Princeton, NJ 08541

### B. THE FORMAT OF THE BOOK.

This book contains chapters on TEST DEVELOPMENT and TEST BIAS which apply to the **entire GMAT.** Although they are placed before and after the chapters on individual GMAT sections, you should read these chapters regardless of how many other chapters you read.

You should read the chapter on TEST DEVELOPMENT **first.** This chapter will give you an understanding of how the GMAT is developed. Later chapters will use this understanding to help you beat the GMAT.

The chapter on TEST BIAS includes commentary and examples for individual sections of the GMAT. You may want to read the relevant portions of the TEST BIAS chapter **after** you read the chapter about each individual section.

Each chapter about **individual sections** of the GMAT has a set format. You will be provided with the following information:

A. **THE STRUCTURE.** You will be given a brief outline of the structure of each section. This is meant to be a supplement to the information given in the GMAT publications. If you have questions about the structure that are not answered in this chapter, consult the GMAT materials for clarification.

B. **THE OPTIONS.** You will be given detailed information about the frequency of various answers. This analysis is based on **actual forms of the GMAT.** This is general information about the section--independent of the specific Tricks given in Section C.

C. **THE TRICKS.** This section provides specific Tricks for each section. These Tricks were developed from a detailed analysis of 20 actual GMAT forms.

The Tricks are provided in formats designed for **different learning styles.**

Each Trick is given a **Number**, a **Strength**, a **Frequency Breakdown**, and an **Explanation.**

For Example:

```
XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX
1. First Word ends in "-ING":  A .7
Frequency Breakdown of Tricks:
                    A     B     C     D     E     All   %A
                   48     3     2     5     8      66   72.7%
XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX
```

The **Number** is simply a way of listing the Tricks. You may want to **memorize** the Number just to make sure you remember all the Tricks you have studied.

The **Strength** indicates the accuracy-rate for the Trick on the 20 GMAT forms used to develop the Tricks. Each Trick will be followed by a designation such as: A .7. This means that when the Trick applies, the correct answer was "A" over 70% of the time on the 20 GMAT forms. This means that the Trick was **wrong** on 20-30% of the questions when it applied.

You should **memorize the Strength** of any Trick you intend to rely upon during the actual GMAT. Some Tricks may **seem** too weak to rely upon. If you decide to ignore a Trick, feel free to!

This book has been prepared to provide **full disclosure** of the possible Tricks for each section. It is up to you to decide which sections, and which Tricks, you will study.

The **Frequency Breakdown** is a detailed presentation of all the answers credited for each Trick on the 28 GMAT forms. You can study the Frequency Breakdown to learn the frequency of the Trick itself--some Tricks are based on only a few questions.

You can also study the Frequency Breakdown to learn the **likely alternative answers** when the Trick does not apply. This book does not attempt to provide a detailed contingency strategy for various question-types. However, if you want to develop a more detailed strategy, the Frequency Breakdown is available for your own analysis.

The **Explanation** of the Trick provides information about **what the Trick is** and **why it works**. As you decide which Tricks to follow, you will want to study both the Frequency Breakdown and the Explanation. Some of you will feel comfortable following any Trick with sufficient Strength. Others will feel comfortable using Tricks only when they are satisfied with the Explanation.

**D. EXAMPLES OF TRICKS FROM PUBLISHED GMAT MATERIALS.** Most of the Tricks are exemplified in the published LSAS materials. This section simply lists the questions that are examples of each Trick.

**E. COMMENTARY ON THE TRICKS.** This section is a free-form discussion of questions in the published GMAT materials. The discussion may include strategies for approaching the section which were **not** discussed in section C of the Chapter.

You should read this section, even if you have not yet received **The Official Guide to GMAT**. Ideally, you should take the sample GMATs **before** you read this section. However, **you should not take your GMAT without reading section E**--even if you haven't been able to take the sample GMATs.

## C. HOW TO USE THIS BOOK IN CONJUNCTION WITH GMAT MATERIALS.

You should begin reading this book **immediately**. You do not need to wait to receive your GMAT materials. Sections A, B, and C of each Chapter, along with the Chapters on TEST DEVELOPMENT and TEST BIAS, will be valuable **by themselves**.

After you have read the Chapter on TEST DEVELOPMENT, read Sections A, B, and C of the Chapter for the section you are particularly worried about. **Then**, take the sample questions in this section. **Finally**, review Sections D and E of the Chapter to evaluate your performance.

**Don't read this book in one day!** This book is meant to be **studied.** The conversational tone is meant to relax you as you approach the GMAT, but the book is meant to be studied over several days or weeks.

Study this book **as soon as possible** and review the book before the test-date. You will find that the detailed analysis of this book will be confusing when you first confront it. If you study the book in the last few days before your test date, you may actually hurt yourself by creating confusion.

If you only read **one Chapter** in this book, read the Chapter on **ANALYSIS OF SITUATIONS.** This GMAT section is **very easy to beat.**

Overall, however, the Chapters on TEST DEVELOPMENT and TEST BIAS will be more valuable to you than the Chapters on individual sections. This is because these Chapters develop a **general strategy** for approaching the test.

The Chapters on individual sections supplement this general strategy with individual Tricks for particular questions. **Not all questions have Tricks** for answering them. You will have to rely on the general strategy provided in these two Chapters for guidance.

## CHAPTER 2. TEST DEVELOPMENT

### A. THE PRE-TEST.

The GMAT has eight 30-minute sections. Six of these are scored--one each of the sections discussed in this book (except for two Problem Solving sections). The other two are pre-test sections. These sections contain questions that may be included on a future GMAT in scored sections. They do not contribute to your score. They are included on the test to see how you do on these questions.

Usually the pre-test sections will look like one of the scored sections--the question-types will be the same and the number of questions will be similar to the scored sections. You will have to assume that all eight sections will be scored--try your best on all sections.

The pre-test sections will normally be harder than the scored sections. This is partly because test-makers have a hard time writing good, hard questions--so they pre-test a lot of them. This is also partly because some of the questions will be defective--there will be no correct answer, more than one correct answer, or too much ambiguity. This is also partly because the questions will not be presented in ascending order of difficult--you might find the very first question to be very difficult.

Since you cannot really tell which section is a pre-test section, you will have to do your best on all sections. But you should not get discouraged if you find one section particularly difficult. This is particularly true if you have another section with the same question-type. The harder section is probably the pre-test section.

These pre-test sections are where all GMAT questions are tried out before putting them on a scored section. This means that your pre-test questions will appear on a future GMAT. More importantly, it means that your GMAT was developed from earlier pre-test sections.

Once you realize how your test was put together with pre-test questions, you can use this information to improve your performance on each section.

Read the rest of this chapter to learn:
1) how the pre-test is used to build an GMAT;
2) how to beat the GMAT by relying on pre-test statistics.

## B. WHAT MAKES A GOOD PRE-TEST QUESTION?

Test-makers are looking for 2 things in a good pre-test question:

1) **the DIFFICULTY of the question,**
2) **the CONSISTENCY of results among pre-test questions.**

The **difficulty** of a question is simply the percentage of people who select the correct answer. Easy questions are answered by most people; hard questions are answered by only a few people. The difficulty is determined by how people answer the question **during the pre-test.** Questions which nobody answers, or everybody answers, correctly on the pre-test are **not included in scored sections**--they are considered too easy or too hard.

The **consistency** of results among pre-test questions is measured by the correlation of results among questions. The test-makers are looking for **questions which produce a consistent scoring pattern.** Put simply, if one person answers the first question on the pre-test correctly but another person answers it incorrectly, the first person should be more likely than the second to answer all the other questions correctly.

Actually, the correlation of results on **one pre-test question** with the results of the **entire test** is used to identify good questions (the statistic is known as the point-biserial correlation). A high correlation between a question's results and the total test results is considered good by the test-makers.

If there is a **negative correlation**, the question is not used on a scored section of the GMAT. A negative correlation means that people with low scores on the pre-test section are getting the question right, while those with high scores on the pre-test are getting the question wrong.

You can use the information about difficulty and consistency to improve your own performance on the test. Difficulty can be used on all sections by all test-takers. Consistency is more valuable in **avoiding test bias.** (See Chapter 8 on TEST BIAS.)

## C. HOW YOUR GMAT WAS DEVELOPED FROM PRE-TEST QUESTIONS.

The pre-test sections are used to determine the difficulty of questions, and to eliminate questions which have a negative correlation with the total score on the pre-test section.

Each scored GMAT section is built by including questions with a **specified range of difficulty.** It includes **only questions with positive correlations** with the total pre-test score. This means there will **never** be a question that everyone on the pre-test answered correctly; nor will there be a question which no

one answered correctly on the pre-test. This also means that there will never be a question which those scoring well on the pre-test got wrong while those scoring poorly got right!

Once each pre-test question is assigned a difficulty level (based on pre-test statistics), the section is built by ordering questions in ascending order of difficulty. Questions which almost everyone got right are in the beginning; those which few got right are at the end.

Test-makers order sections in ascending difficulty to encourage you on the first few questions so you'll try your best on the section. If the hardest questions were at the beginning, many people would get discouraged, some would spend too much time on the first questions and never get to the easier questions, and some would give up completely.

Ideally, the test-makers would like to build a test in which everyone got every question right until they got a question wrong--and then got all the rest of the questions wrong after that. You might imagine the test-makers building a mental high-jump contest--raising the level of difficulty until you couldn't go any higher. No test fits this ideal model, but it is important to understand what the test-makers are doing when they construct each section.

## D. HOW TO USE PRE-TEST STATISTICS TO BEAT THE GMAT.

You can use this information about how the test is developed to beat the GMAT. Put simply, this means that you should choose obvious answers in early questions; avoid obvious answers in later questions. This rule is a direct result of the test construction process.

Obvious answers are correct early in the test because most people answered the questions correctly on the pre-test. If there were a subtle trick to answering the question, it would not be answered by most people and it wouldn't be early in the section. So don-t waste time looking for subtle tricks on early questions. Once you hae selected an answer that seems correct, pick it and go on!

Obvious answers are always wrong on later questions in the test. If the "obvious answer" was correct, many people would have picked it on the pre-test and it wouldn't seem to be a hard question--it wouldn't be at the end of your GMAT section. If you pick the obvious answer to a late question, you will be doing what most people did on the pre-test--and you will be wrong.

It is easiest to divide the section into Thirds. The first Third is easy; the last Third is hard. The middle Third contains questions which cannot be answered by choosing or avoiding the obvious answers. This is because these are the middle-difficulty

questions. It is possible that most of the people got the questions right or wrong, but the tendency is not as strong as on the first or last Third. The tendency is not strong enough to help you select the correct answer.

This means that you will want to use **different strategies for different parts of each section.** Go along with the crowd on early questions; be a wise rebel on later questions. Remember, you can do this because you are not simpy guessing how your fellow test-takers will answer a question. You **already know how people on the pre-test answered the question** by looking at its position in the section. Thus, it is possible for everyone to follow this strategy--the correct answers won't change after you take the test, and all questions count the same toward your score, regardless of their difficulty on the pre-test or the actual scored sections.

The strategy for early questions is completely straightforward: pick the answer that you get on your first impression. On the Reading Comprehension section, this will be the answer that seems correct on the first reading. On the Sentence Correction section, this will be the answer that fits your first attempt at grammatically answering the question. On the Data Sufficiency and Problem Solving sections, this will be the answer that jumps out at your from your initial computations. On the Analysis of Situations section, this will the the answer that fits the Tricks.

The strategy for the last questions is harder. What you must realize is that **the strategy DOES NOT involve trying to figure out the correct answer.** What the strategy **does** involve is **finding the answers that everyone picked on the pre-test.** Once you find the answers that everyone picked on the pre-test, **eliminate them!** The question wouldn't be among the last on the section if everyone picked the right answer.

There are two basic ways to identify the question that everyone else picked. The first is to find answers that **look easy.** On the Reading Comprehension section, these answers might be the ones with the short, simple words. On the Analysis of Situations section, these answers might be the ones that **seem to fit the Tricks.** (But since there are only two sets of questions in this section, the strategy might not work as well on this section.) On the Data Sufficiency and Problem Solving sections, thes answers might be the ones that **repeat numbers from the question, or involve simple calculations.**

The second way to identify wrong answers on the hard questions is to **quickly figure out the answer.** This strategy is easiest to imagine on the Data Sufficiency and Problem Solving sections. Remember, if you can find the answer in a few seconds, everyone else probably could do the same thing, and that is probably the wrong answer.

Once you have eliminated the answers that everyone picked on the pre-test, **use your head in picking the correct answer.** Don't pick an answer that looks stupid just because you are sure no one picked it on the pre-test. On the Reading Comprehension section, you might pick an answer with an unfamiliar word in it. On the Analysis of Situations section, you might pick an answer that **goes against one of the Tricks.** In any event, you should have some sense of why the answer might be correct--don't just pick the least obvious answer.

You can practice this strategy with the **last set of questions** on the Reading Comprehension, or Analysis of Situations section; or with the **last five questions** on the Data Sufficiency or Problem Solving sections. If you get the answer wrong, go back and figure out how you could have identified the correct answer.

Learning how to answer the last questions on the section by avoiding the obvious answers is a **sure way of raising your scores,** since these are the questions which most people, including yourself, are likely to get wrong. This is true even if you expect to get a very high score--your score can probably be raised **only** by getting the last questions right on the section.

I will be mentioning the strategies you should follow on different portions of the section through the following chapters.

Remember that there are **two factors** that determine the answer and difficulty of a question.

1) The **test-makers** determine the correct answer to the question;
2) The **people on the pre-test** determine the difficulty of the question.

Sometimes I will focus on the test-makers' thinking in chosing an answer, or the placement of an answer among the options A-E. Sometimes I will emphasize the people on the pre-test and their guessing strategies. You should understand the difference between these two forces, and how to use both groups' tendencies to help you identify the answers.

**If you think you are just outsmarting the test-makers, you are limiting yourself.** You are also outsmarting the people on the pre-test. You are **not outsmarting the other people taking your GMAT.** The Tricks and strategies in this book can be used by all test-takers--the answers won't change on a hard question just because everyone gets it right on the actual GMAT.

## CHAPTER 3. ANALYSIS OF SITUATIONS

### A. THE STRUCTURE.

This section consists of two reading passages, which the **Official Guide to the GMAT** states "will usually be about 850 words long." After each passage, 17 or 18 statements are listed which must be classifed, for a total of 35 questions to be answered in 30 minutes. Since this is the **largest number of questions** to be answered in any 30-minute section, it may seem to present the greatest time pressures for quick responses or blank answer grids.

After reading this chapter you should be able to approach the section as the quickest, **easiest section to pile up points.** Remember, each question counts equally in computing your Corrected Raw Score on the test.

This section is readily coachable because it has a **structured answer format.** This means that the choice of A-E is determined by the definitions given for each answer. You should **memorize these definitions NOW.** You should carefully study the definitions given in the **GMAT Bulletin of Information** and especially in Chapter VI of **The Official Guide to GMAT.**

This chapter provides Tricks for identifying each category of answer, "A" through "E", on the basis of the linguistic and textual similarities of answers on previous forms of the GMAT, including the four sample tests included in **The Official Guide to GMAT.** You should be able to identify the correct answer simply by carefully reading the statements to be categorized and judiciously applying the Tricks described below.

**You might be interested to know that I have taken all of the Analysis of Situations sections on the 20 GMAT forms released to date. I categorized 73% of the statements correctly--without ever reading the passage.** The Tricks I used are described in this chapter.

## B. THE OPTIONS.

The structure of the GMAT changed after the first 10 forms were released under New York's Truth in Testing Law. Put simply, the first 10 forms had two separate Analysis of Situations sections with a few more questions than the recent forms--which each have 35 questions in a single 30-minute section.

Although the Tricks I describe below are based on an analysis of all 20 forms that have been released to me, this discussion of the options is limited to an analysis of the last 10 released GMAT forms.

**The most consistent pattern among the options on each test is the appearance of 7 statements categorized as "A" Major Objective. This has occured on 9 out of 10 GMAT forms.** This pattern usually reflects the presence of 3 "A" answers after one passage and 4 "A" answers after the other. There is no consistent pattern related to finding 4 "A" answers in the group of 10 statements.

Since the passages are probably included on the test so that the passage preceding the comparatively easier set of questions is placed first, if you are confident that you have accurately identified the 3 or 4 "A" answers in the first group of statements, you can depend on your good judgment in limiting your choice of A answers in the second set of statements. Of course, the pattern may have been changed on the test you take, but I feel you should have this information as you approach the section.

**The second consistent pattern on the last 5 released GMAT forms is the presence of an EVEN number of "E" Unimportant Issue answers.** The last two forms have had 10 "E" answers, the prior three forms had 8. What is significant about this pattern is that the "E" answers were **evenly divided** between the two sets of questions, 5 and 5, or 4 and 4. Moreover, "E" was the **most frequent** Thus, you can again use your judgment on the first set of statements to help you with the second set.

This pattern seems to be a practical result of the test development process. It is likely that "E" statements are the easiest to write. The balance between sets could be a conscious specification of the test-writers, as they decide how many of these easy-to-write statements will be included, or it could be the net result of failing to produce enough of the "B", "C", and "D" statements that survived the pretest process with acceptable statistics (See Chapter 2 on TEST DEVELOPMENT).

Whatever the reason for the pattern, it has occured on the last forms. **More importantly, you should not feel uncomfortable selecting "E" most often--that has been the result on the last 5 sections.** Don't pick more than 10--the highest number to date.

While "A" has remained constant at 7 answers per section, and "E" has grown from 6 or 7 on the first five forms to 8 or 10 on the last five forms, the number of "B", "C", and "D" answers has fluctuated on all 10 forms. On the last two forms, there were only 4 "B" and 5 "D" answers. This is not enough to call a pattern, but you should not feel uncomfortable if you only pick 1 or 2 "B" or "D" answers in a single set of statements--it has happened before.

As you review your answer grid after answering both sets of questions, you can analyze the total number of answers to identify the patterns discussed above. The Tricks described below should give you enough time to review your answer grid for the patterns discussed here.

If you find 3 of the same letter in a row, beware! There have NEVER been more than 2 of the same letter in a row on the 10 sections. You should review all three statements and probably reclassify at least one of them. As you go through the statements for the first time, don't worry about looking for 3-in-a-row. If you try to look for patterns as well as to classify statements, you are in danger of being confused or distracted. Classify each statements independently, then look for patterns to help identify those statements you may have misclassified.

**C. The TRICKS.**

++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++
++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++
**MAJOR OBJECTIVES--Answer "A" on All Questions.**
++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++
++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++

XXXX

As you can see from the Frequency Breakdown of the Trick, the most common alternative is "E" Unimportant Issue. Since you will be reading the passage (something I have not done for the 20 GMAT forms, as you recall) you should be able to distinguish a Major Objective from an Unimportant Issue. On the last two released sections, there were 3 "A" and 3 "E" answers with "-ING" words at the beginning.

Of the 5 "D" Major Assumption answers fitting the "-ING" rule, 3 are "CONTINUING" (See Trick #16).

**********

**2. First Word ends in "-TION": A.3**
**Frequency Breakdown of Trick:**

| A | B | C | D | E | All | %A |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 15 | 3 | 2 | 9 | 10 | 39 | 38.5% |

**********

Words ending in "-TION" often have a linguistic function similar to a gerund. For example, sample question 7 in the GMAT **Bulletin of Information**, "ACQUISITION" could be replaced by "ACQUIRING"--a gerund. Thus, when you encounter a word ending in "-TION", see if you can substitute a gerund without changing the meaning of the statement. If you can, this Trick may very well apply.

A similar linguistic interchange often occurs between words that end in "-MENT" and gerunds. For example "PROCUREMENT" and "DEVELOPMENT" could be changed to "PROCURING" and "DEVELOPING". I haven't figured out the Frequency Breakdown for these words as indicators of "A" answers, but I have frequently recognized such words in correctly identifying "A" answers without reading the passage. So too, with "MAINTENANCE" and "MAINTAINING".

In addition to understanding the interchangeability of "-ING" and "-TION" words, you will notice that the next most frequent answer for "-TION" words is "E" Unimportant Issue. This is the same situation facing you with "-ING" words. Since the test writers cannot easily disguise the linguistic function of such words, they are forced to reduce your gambling odds by putting in quite a few "E" Unimportant Issue answers which also fit the Tricks. This may trip me up when I refuse to read the passage for research purposes, but it should be of much less value in tripping you up during the actual test.

Finally, of the 9 "D" Major Assumption answers that fit the "TION" Trick, 5 are "CONTINUATION" (See Trick 16).

**3. Short Statements That Cry Out for a Gerund.**

This is a Trick for which I can give no Frequency Breakdown, since it would be arbitrary for me to categorize questions on this basis. Nevertheless, you should be aware that this is the latest, and perhaps last, attempt of the test-makers to foil the original gerund Trick. Rather than change a gerund to a "-TION" word, the test-makers have recently just dropped gerunds from the beginning of statements. **When you read a statement, you will find yourself automatically inserting a gerund at the begining of the statement.** For all you know, you may be inserting the same gerund that was lopped off the statement by the test makers.

For example, if you should see a statement such as "HIGHER PROFITS" or "A GOOD REPORT," you will find yourself inserting "GETTING" or "WRITING" at the front of the statement in order to give it meaning. When you do so, you have uncovered a disguised gerund and can select "A".

These statements tend to be shorter than others, in case you find yourself inserting gerunds in front of many statements. Remember, the statement may have started with a gerund, only to have the gerund chopped off to disguise the answer.

**MAJOR FACTORS--Answer "B" on All Questions.**

**4. "TOTAL", "NET": B 1.0**

**Frequency Breakdown of Trick:**

| A | B | C | D | E | All | %B |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| - | 8 | - | - | - | 8 | 100% |

Believe it or not, this Trick is both obvious and completely accurate, to date. It doesn't occur very often, but "TOTAL" occured on the last GMAT reviewed, and "NET" appeared on the second most recent form.

**********
**5. "EACH LOCATION", "EACH ALTERNATIVE", "VARIOUS", "UNDER CONSIDERATION,": B .7**
**Frequency Breakdown of Trick:**

| A | B | C | D | E | All | %B |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| - | 55 | 3 | 3 | 11 | 72 | 76.4% |

**********

This Trick is somewhat difficult to define specifically, or to perform precise Frequency Breakdown analysis, but it is essential for your understanding of how MAJOR FACTORS are stated in this section. Originally I tried to count only those instances in which "EACH LOCATION" or "EACH ALTERNATIVE" appeared. This proved to be a very good Trick, but too rare to be of practical value on most tests.

For example, all 5 times "EACH LOCATION" appeared, "B" was the answer. In 7 of the 8 times "EACH ALTERNATIVE" appeared, "B" was the answer, with "E" scored as correct the eighth time. Most of the time, however, "B" answers included "VARIOUS," "UNDER CONSIDERATION," or "EACH" followed by slightly different terms than "LOCATION" or "ALTERNATIVE".

As I took the 20 forms of the GMAT Analysis of Situations sections, this pattern occured quite frequently, with a total of 72 instances which could be safely classified under this Trick--safely because you would also classify these statements as fulfilling the Trick.

As with so many of these Tricks, the most frequent response other than "B" was "E" Unimportant Issue. You should be able to identify these statements by reading the passage. The Official Guide to GMAT states that "Major factors are always stated explicitly in the passage" (p. 119).

Notice that there has never been a statement that fits this Trick that was correctly categorized as "A".

Finally, you should realize that this Trick usually occurs more than once in a single set. Thus, when you see two, or three, or even four statements with a similar phrase, most of them are "B" and one may be "E". Rarely will there also be a "C" or "D" answer as well.

**********
**6. "EFFECT": B .3**
**Frequency Breakdown of Trick:**

| A | B | C | D | E | All | %B |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| - | 5 | 2 | 2 | 5 | 14 | 35.7% |

**********

This Trick occurs infrequently, and is not very strong. However, most of the exceptions are "E" Unimportant Issue. (In fact, you might see this as a Trick for "E".) But since "Major factors are always stated explicitly in the passage",

finding the word "EFFECT" should be a good clue to review the passage to see if it is stated explicitly in the passage.

Notice again that there has never been a statement with "EFFECT" that was correctly categorized as "A".

++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++
++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++
**MINOR FACTORS--Answer "C" in All Answers.**
++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++
++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++

XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX
**7. Specific Mention of a Single Alternative or Location.**
XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

This is another Trick that is impossible to define specifically, or to measure with a precise Frequency Breakdown analysis. However, it is the **most important Trick** for identifying **Minor Factors.**

I cannot accurately identify all statements that specifically mention a single alternative or location (because I have never read the passages). However, enough of the statements so obviously mentioned a single alternative or location that I was still able to use the Trick in identifying Minor Factors without reading the passage.

Consider, for example, a situation which requires a decision among three locations for a business venture. Statements which specifically mention only one of the locations will typically be classified as "C".

In a sense, this Trick is a complement to the "EACH ALTERNATIVE" Trick. Put together, they help you understand how the test-makers distinguish between Major and Minor Factors. Once you realize that this is how they distinguish between the two types of Factors, you can easily spot both "B" and "C" answers.

**When you compare the statements with the passages, you will find that Minor Factors will be mentioned later in the passage, as each of the locations or alternatives is discussed.** (I know this because I have read the passages on the old LSAT forms which contained this type of question.) This does not mean that you should spend a lot of time underlining specific facts when you first read the passage--this will waste a lot of time since many of these specific facts will not appear in the statements to be classified.

**********

**8. "MAINTENANCE", "UTILITIES", "FUEL", "AGE": C .6**

**Frequency Breakdown of Trick:**

| A | B | C | D | E | All | %C |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | - | 5 | - | 2 | 8 | 62.5% |

**********

This is a catch-all Trick that still occurs infrequently. Yet it does show how the test-makers tend to categorize Minor Factors. Never has "MAINTENANCE," "UTILITIES," "FUEL," or "AGE" been categorized as "B" Major Factor. Thus, if you encounter "UTILITIES," with "EACH LOCATION," you can be reasonably sure that this is an exception to Trick #5. (See example on p. 119 of **The Official Guide to GMAT.**)

Did you remember that "MAINTENANCE" could be a disguise for "MAINTAINING" and therefore "A"?

++++++++++

++++++++++

**MAJOR ASSUMPTIONS--Answer "D" in All Answers.**

++++++++++

++++++++++

**********

**9. First Word Ends in "-ITY: D .4**

**Frequency Breakdown of Trick:**

| A | B | C | D | E | All | %D |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 21 | 13 | 38 | 15 | 88 | 43.2% |

**********

As the Frequency Breakdown shows, a large number of words ending in "-ITY" begin statements classified as "D" Major Objective. Thus, it is valuable to learn the Trick of the "-ITY" words. However, the large number of "D" answers identified by the "-ITY" Trick does not, in itself, lead to a terribly great accuracy rate (about double the 20% random accuracy rate). This is partly because of the large number of "E" Unimportant Issue answers, which you will have to identify by reading the passage.

The low accuracy rate is also due, however, to the relatively large number of "B" and "C" answers. (There was only 1 "A" Major Objective answer that began with an "-ITY" word.)

This is because there are cross-over Tricks that come into play (e.g. "EACH LOCATION" for "B", Specific Mention of a Single Alternative for "C"). It is also because a few "-ITY" words don't really share the linguistic characteristics of most of the "-ITY" words.

A complete Frequency Breakdown for each "-ITY" word that appeared on the 20 GMAT forms appears below. Don't memorize this list, just review it for the typical "-ITY" word.

| WORD | A | B | C | D | E | All | %D |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Availability | | 1 | 3 | 10 | | 14 | 71.4% |
| Ability | 1 | 1 | 1 | 9 | | 12 | 75.0% |
| Desirability | | | | 3 | 1 | 4 | 75.0% |
| Undesirability | | | | 2 | | 2 | 100.0% |
| Probability | | | | 2 | 1 | 3 | 66.7% |
| Suitability | | 1 | | 2 | | 3 | 66.7% |
| Inability | | | 2 | 2 | | 4 | 50.0% |
| Impossibility | | | | 1 | | 1 | 100.0% |
| Necessity | | | | 1 | | 1 | 100.0% |
| Inadvisability | | | | 1 | | 1 | 100.0% |
| Unacceptability | | | | 1 | | 1 | 100.0% |
| Infeasibility | | | | 1 | | 1 | 100.0% |
| Versatility | | | | | 1 | 1 | 0.0% |
| Quantity | | | | | 1 | 1 | 0.0% |
| Practicality | | | | | 1 | 1 | 0.0% |
| Feasibility | | | | | 1 | 1 | 0.0% |
| Unavailability | | | 1 | 1 | 1 | 3 | 33.3% |
| Possibility | | 2 | 2 | 2 | 5 | 11 | 18.2% |
| Deductability | | | 1 | | | 1 | 0.0% |
| Reliability | | 2 | 1 | 1 | | 4 | 25.0% |
| Accessibility | | | 1 | | 1 | 2 | 0.0% |
| Profitability | | 1 | | | 1 | 2 | 0.0% |
| Marketability | | 1 | | | | 1 | 0.0% |
| Capability | | 1 | | | | 1 | 0.0% |
| Capacity | | 1 | | | | 1 | 0.0% |
| Stability | | 1 | | | | 1 | 0.0% |
| Proximity | | 3 | 1 | | | 4 | 0.0% |
| Quality | | 5 | 1 | | 1 | 7 | 0.0% |

Reading the chart from the top to bottom, the words most likely to be "D" Major Assumption appear first. Reading from the bottom to the top, the chart highlights those "-ITY" words that have frequently been "B" Major Factor or "C" Minor Factor.

The words at the bottom of the chart have never been "D" on the forms I have reviewed. This is in part due to the linguistic characteristics of some of the words. For example, "QUALITY", "PROXIMITY", "STABILITY", and "CAPACITY" don't really work the same way that "AVAILABILITY", "ABILITY", "DESIRABILITY", and "UNDESIRABILITY" typically do. The word "POSSIBILITY" usually introduces "E" Unimportant Issue.

You will also notice that the negative-form words are often "D", even when the positive-form word is less easily classified. for example, "UNDESIRABILITY", "IMPOSSIBILITY", "INADVISABILITY", "UNACCEPTABILITY", and "UNACCEPTABILITY", and "INFEASIBILITY" are all 100% "D". On the other hand, "DESIRABILITY", while a 75% "D" bet, is not a perfect bet. "POSSIBILITY" is usually "D"; "FEASIBILITY" was "E" the one time it appeared. Only "UNAVAILABILITY" showed a less-than-50% accuracy rate for "D" among the negative-form words.

**********

**10. "EXISTENCE": D 1.0**

**Frequency Breakdown of Trick:**

| A | B | C | D | E | All | %D |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| - | - | - | 6 | - | 6 | **100.0%** |

**********

After all that confusion, isn't it comforting to know that some Tricks have been 100% accurate to date. (Of course, no warranty is made or implied in this statement for the GMAT form you are about to take.) You philosophy buffs may enjoy the fact that "EXISTENCE" has always been a Major Assumption on the GMAT!

**********

**11. "VALUE OF": D 1.0**

**Frequency Breakdown of Trick:**

| A | B | C | D | E | All | %D |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| - | - | - | 2 | - | 2 | **100.0%** |

**********

This is a very rare, if accurate, Trick. But it does give you added insight about the way the test makers tend to categorize Major Assumptions. "VALUE", like "EXISTENCE", is always a Major Assumption.

**********

**12. "IMPORTANCE": D.8**

**Frequency Breakdown of Trick:**

| A | B | C | D | E | All | %D |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| - | - | - | 6 | 1 | 7 | **85.7%** |

**********

This Trick was perfectly accurate on all the LSAT forms which contained this section, until it was dropped as "too coachable." It was also running true to form until the second-last GMAT form released.

Thus, a word to the wise is necessary--the test-makers may have awakened to some of these Tricks. They may be consciously working to foil mechanical application of them. Don't worry too much, however, the last form had one "IMPORTANCE" statement and it was "D".

**********

**13. "NEED": D.7**

**Frequency Breakdown of Trick:**

| A | B | C | D | E | All | %D |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| - | - | - | 6 | 2 | 8 | **75.0%** |

**********

This is another Trick that can give you the simple choice of choosing between "D" Major Assumption, and "E" Unimportant Issue. This should be easy, since Major Assumptions are mentioned in the paragraph; Unimportant Issues are not.

**********

14. "LIKELIHOOD": D.7

Frequency Breakdown of Trick:

| A | B | C | D | E | All | %D |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| - | - | - | 11 | 4 | 15 | 73.3% |

**********

This is another word that is a classic Assumption word. Nonetheless, it continues to appear. On the last two forms released, it appeared 3 times, always with "D" as the answer.

**********

15. "WILLINGNESS": D.5

Frequency Breakdown of Trick:

| A | B | C | D | E | All | %D |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| - | 1 | 3 | 5 | 1 | 10 | 50.0% |

**********

This Trick has a wider variety of options to choose from, and accordingly, a lower accuracy rate. Notice that there has yet to be a Major Objective introduced by "WILLINGNESS".

**********

16. "CONTINUED," "CONTINUING," "CONTINUATION" D.8

Frequency Breakdown of Trick:

| A | B | C | D | E | All | %D |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 4 | - | - | 19 | - | 23 | 82.6% |

**********

These three variations of "CONTINUE" are an appropriate place to end the discussion of Major Assumptions. Together they point to the future--the time when Assumtpions prevail!

In contrast to Trick #15, "A" Major Objective is the only other option which has been introduced by any of these three words. This should make it clear that the choice between a Trick and its likely alternative is a function of the word under consideration and not a function of the relationship between the options themselves. Thus, for "WILLINGNESS", you can eliminate "A" and choose from among the four remaining options; for "CONTINUED", "CONTINUED", "CONTINUATION", the only other option that fits the Trick is "A".

Finally, you will recall that these three words also fit the "-ING" and "-TION" Tricks (Review Tricks #1 and #2). As was noted above, "CONTINUATION" was a primary exception to the "-TION" Trick, with 5 appearances as "D". Somewhat surprisingly, it has never appeared as an "A" statement. In fact, 3 out of 4 "A" statements included in the Frequency Breakdown for this Trick were accounted for by "CONTINUED", and only 1 by "CONTINUING".

Therefore, read each statement to understand the statement and its relationship to the classification scheme of the section. These Tricks are primarily intended as an aid to your understanding, not as simple gambling odds.

♦♦♦

## D. EXAMPLES OF TRICKS IN THE OFFICIAL GUIDE TO GMAT.

Each Trick is exemplified in statements contained in the three sample Analysis of Situations sections provided in **The Official Guide to GMAT**, as well as in section 3 of the authentic test provided at the end of that booklet.

These sections were originally included in the forms of the GMAT which were administered and released since January 1980 pursuant to New York's Truth in Testing legislation. Thus, they formed part of the basis for establishing the Tricks outlined above. It should come as no surprise, then, that the Tricks work quite well on these forms.

Since these were some of the early forms relased under Truth in Testing, they are not completely representative of later versions of the section released more recently. In particular, some of the Tricks, such as the "-ING" Trick, work better on these three forms than they do overall. Nonetheless, these sample sections are good specimens for you to familiarize yourself with the Tricks in a real section.

Since the three sample sections are early versions of the section, you will notice that they allow more time than is currently allowed (40 minutes vs. 30 minutes) and they have fewer statements to classify (32 vs. 35). This is because each passage was originally presented as a separately-timed 20-minute section, with a few additional multiple-choice questions about the passages that were called Data Application questions. This type of question has been dropped from the sample sections, but the time-limits of the original versions remain.

You would be well advised to time yourself on the basis of 30-minutes per section. The lengthier passages (current passages "will usually be about 850 words," according to **The Official Guide to GMAT**) should not cause you time problems.

Abbreviations Used:

**SQ Sample Questions.** Contained in the **Bulletin of Information** for the GMAT.

All other questions are from the sample sections in **The Official Guide to GMAT.**

**#** These questions appear to fit the Tricks, but have an answer that does not fit the Tricks. You should study these questions with particular care to be sure that you will be able to identify the questions which do not fit the Tricks.

**1. First Word Ends in "-ING":** A.7
I.2, 7, 13, 23, 28
II.1, 8, 12, 16, 19, 22, 27
III.1, 25#, 29, 32

A 4%, 10, 20
B 23, 20
C 6%, 8%, 27

2. First Word Ends in "-TION": A .3
SO 7
I.11%, 15%, 18, 27%
III.2%
A 29%

3. Short Statement That Cry Out for a Gerund.
III.9, 23
A 7, 35
B 1, 18, 31
C 5, 32

4. "TOTAL", "NET" in Statement: B 1.8
I.17
II.15

5. "EACH LOCATION", "EACH ALTERNATIVE", "VARIOUS", "UNDER CONSIDERATION" in Statement: B .7
I.1, 6, 8, 10%, 12, 15%, 21, 22%, 25%, 29
II.4, 6%, 15, 26%
III.24, 31
A 6, 15, 33
B 5, 13, 14%, 20, 29, 34, 35%
C 6, 9, 16, 20, 25

6. "EFFECT" Begins Statement: B .3
III.7
C 30%, 34%

7. Specific Mention of a Single Alternative or Location.
SO 9
I.3, 9, 11%, 14, 31
II.3
III.6, 12, 13%
A 8, 10, 13, 14, 16, 17%, 20%, 23, 26, 30, 34
B 19, 25, 32, 33
C 2, 7, 22, 30, 34%

8. "MAINTENANCE", "UTILITIES", "FUEL", "AGE" in Statement:
C .6
I.10, 20, 25
II. 26, 29
C 2, 3%

9. First Word Ends in "-ITY": D .4
I.6%, 8%, 16, 19, 21%, 22%, 26, 29%, 30
II.5, 13, 17%, 23, 25, 31
III.6%, 10%, 12%, 30, 31%
A 5%, 13%, 14%
C 26, 35%

10. "EXISTENCE" Begins Statement: D 1.0
I.24
III.18

11. "VALUE OF" Begins Statement: D 1.0
B 27

12. "IMPORTANCE" Begins Statement: D .8
B 10
C 11, 23

13. "NEED" Begins Statement: D .7
I.32
II. 14% 28
A 9, 32

14. "LIKELIHOOD" Begins Statement: D .7
II.28
III.11
C 4

15. "WILLINGNESS" Begins Statement: D .5
II.2, 7
B 4

16. "CONTINUED", "CONTINUING", "CONTINUATION" Begins Statement:
D .8
I.11
II.32
III.2, 28
B 21, 23%
C 8

17. "ORIGINAL", "PREVIOUS", "PRESENT", "CURRENT", in Statement:
E .6
II.10%
A 22
C 28

18. "SPECIFIC", "SPECIALLY" in Statement: E 1.0
I.32

## E. COMMENTARY ON THE TRICKS.

I.2, I.7, I.13, II.1, II.8, II.12, II.16, II.19, II.22, II.25, II.27. The gerund Trick often comes in bunches, with all 3 "A" answers filling the Trick in the first section. However, recall that the last two GMAT forms have had 3 "A" and 3 "E" answers. Thus, while you can still eliminate "B", "C", and "D" when a gerund appears, you should make sure that the statement does not constitute an Unimportant Issue.

**I.7, II.16, II.25.** These three gerund answers are discussed in the Explanatory Material for the Analysis of Situations section on pp. 126-27 of **The Official Guide to GMAT.** Notice the long explanation offered to justify the choice of "A"--a choice which is readily made with the help of the gerund Trick. Thus, the Trick gives you not only accuracy, but also a speed advantage, allowing you to puzzle out answers which are not readily determinied from the Tricks.

Notice that I.7 is described as a "difficult" question" and that II.,16 and II.25 are described as "moderately difficult." With the help of the gerund Trick, they become ridiculously easy. What a designation of "difficult" or "moderately difficult" indicates is the item-statistics associated with the question during the pretest (See Chapter 2 on TEST DEVELOPMENT).

If these obvious gerund questions retained item-statistics that indicated that relatively few test-takers answered them correctly, it is likely that coaching for these forms was not widespread enough to affect the overall item-statistics (Those who knew the Trick were still a minority of test-takers).

With the publication of this book, the gerund Trick can be expected to become much more widely known. This will no doubt affect the accuracy rate for gerund statements with "A" as the answer. Thus, questions will appear to be "easier" when the item-statistics are gathered. This will not necessarily reduce the value of correctly answering them, but it will increase the relative cost to test-takers who are still unaware of the Trick and continue to mark an incorrect response.

In the discussion of II.25 the author admits that Objectives are often introduced in the reading passages with "WERE INTERESTED IN," "WANTED", or "THEY MUST HAVE." This is interesting information, but it does not mean that you should spend a lot of time during your first reading of the passage finding and underlining such phrases. Sometimes these phrases may not precede statements that appear later as questions to be classified.

It is much more valuable for you to carefully analyze the linguistic structure of the statements to be classified, rather than the language in the passage. Of course, the test-makers cannot admit this without conceding that this section does not really measure what it purports to measure.

Finally, the explanation for each of the three questions makes a point of distinguishing between a Major Objective and a Factor. While this may reflect the author's notion of the logic involved in the statement, or may reflect the overall item-statistics of the question, it does not fit the Frequency Breakdown for the gerund Trick. Words ending in "-ING" are least likely to begin "B" or "C" statements. Those words that do may not be genuine gerunds, but rather adjectives ending in "-ING".

I.18. The word "ACQUISITION" probably deserves a Trick Number all for itself. This word typically introduces "A", and continues to do so despite the fact that it does so in the Sample Passage that precedes every Analysis of Situations section on every GMAT. Some Tricks, obvious as they may seem, continue to be useful.

III.9. These statements cry out for a gerund at the beginning to make sense out of them.

Notice also that without these "A" answers, the section would have too few "A" answers (less than 7 on a section of two sets of statements). Thus, you can rely on your analysis of THE OPTIONS section of this chapter to point out the need to identify more "A" answers.

The search for hidden gerunds should begin after you notice that there are no gerunds or substitutes in the set of statements. This means that the gerunds were dropped from the statements and it is up to you to find the statements that are crying out for a gerund to give them meaning.

III.1 This is an example of a disguised gerund. If you can quickly transform the first word from "DEVELOPMENT OF" to "DEVELOPING" without changing the meaninig of the statement, you have an "A" answer.

III.13 This is a statement that does not exactly fit Trick #4, but the term "LONG-RANGE" should give you sufficient indication that the logic of Trick #4 applies and that "B" is the answer.

I made up the Tricks to aid in your understanding of the section. Just because I did not phrase the Trick to specifically include an item you encounter on your form of the GMAT, do not hesitate to apply the logic of the Trick to the statement. Remember, it was the logic of the statement classifications that produced the Trick. You should be able to work from the logic of the Trick to correctly classify statements during the actual GMAT.

I.10, 25, II.26. These are statements that fit the "EACH LOCATION" Trick, but are not answered by "B". This should not be a problem for you, if you also recognize that I.10 and II.26 both refer to "UTILITIES" and are thus "C" answers. So too, I.25 refers to "AGE" and is a "C" answer.

In general, when you encounter several "EACH LOCATION" statements, you should look for the additional portions of the statements that will identify those which are not "B" answers.

I.6, 8, 21, 29. These statements exemplify another aspect of the two-different-Tricks situtions. The "-ITY" trick has frequent exceptions. Each of these statements has the "EACH LOCATION" Trick embedded in them as well. Thus, they are "B" answers rather than "D" answers.

You might approach these statements by recalling that "EACH LOCATION" is a 8.7 Trick, while the "-ITY" Trick has only a 0.4 accuracy-rate. Thus, it is more likely that the statements will be an exception to the relatively weak "-ITY" Trick than to the relatively stronger "EACH LOCATION" Trick.

This does not mean that you can mechanically apply the accuracy rate numbers in statements with two Tricks. This is because I made up the Tricks, but not the tests you are about to take. However, it does point up the need to memorize both the Tricks and the accuracy rates so that you can use both pieces of information as you make your selections on the GMAT.

**II.2, 7.** These statements involve the "WILLINGNESS", "UNWILLINGNESS" Trick.

You must return to the reasons for the Tricks' accuracy. You must (in all applications) be confident that the Trick applies to the statement's classification for a logical reason. Do not approach these Tricks simply as gambling odds, deciding for yourself that a Trick could, or couldn't be, right more than once, or twice, or three times, in a single set. No such gambling odds or rules exist. These Tricks are intended as linguistic clues to analyzing and classifying the statements.

**The overall lesson to be learned from these Tricks is that it is the STATEMENTS, not the passage, which must be carefully read and analyzed.** Thus, the gerund Trick works because the English language works in such a way that the test-writers tend to use gerunds (as we all do) when stating a Major Objective to be achieved. The Tricks are valuable because there are certain patterns of statement-types that have appeared so often in this section that recognizing the Tricks and patterns is an easy way to identify the classification of the statement. However, the Tricks are in no way a substitute for understanding the logic of classification.

**I.17-32, II.17-32.** These two sections exhibit very different relationships to the tricks. The Sample Test I set of statements includes a Trick in each statement, sometimes two Tricks in a single statement. On the other hand, the Sample Test III set contains only 8 out of 16 statements with a Trick included.

You might think that the first set would be considerably easier for someone, such as myself, who didn't bother to read the passage. In fact, when I took these sections, before knowing they were included in **The Official Guide to GMAT**, I got 13 of 16 correct in each of the two sets! There may be no rhyme or reason for this similar score, and I might not have earned the same score if I had taken the sections on different days, but this result shows that you do not need the Tricks to score well on this section.

Once you understand how the section is put together, and what different classifications mean to the test-makers, you can analyze statement sets without regard to the Tricks.

**There does seem to be a profitable strategy for answering a set of statements that is not full of Tricks.** You should first review the set of statements to identify all the Tricks you can. Then, go back and decide whether the Tricks fit in each instance where they appear. Once you have identified the classification of the statements with Tricks, go back and begin classifying statements with no obvious Trick.

I prefer to begin by searching for the "A" answers. Since the gerund, "-TION," and hidden gerund Tricks all involve the same logic, it is usually possible to find all of the "A" statements quickly. Remember, there should be 3 or 4 in a single set.

I then search for the "D" Major Assumption statements. These are often identified by Tricks, and the logic of assumptions seems to be relatively easy to spot even when no Trick is involved.

After you look through the statements once to identify the Tricks, and a second time to identify "A" answers, and for a third time to find "D" answers, you should now be able to identify the "E" Unimportant Issues. Recall that the recent versions of this section have contained either 4 or 5 "E" answers in each set, with an **equal number** in each of the two sets. These statements wil typically **not** be mentioned in the passage, or even implied. In any event, you should be able to pick them out by analyzing the statements themselves and searching for clues that will identify them as Unimportant Issues.

Once you are able to identify the "A", "D", and "E" statements, all that is left are the Factors. You can then compare the remaining statements to each other to identify the Major and Minor factors. Often Minor Factors will be subclassifications of Major Factors.

Of course, this general strategy may not apply to the set you encounter. If the "EACH LOCATION" Trick appears frequently, you will be able to identify quickly the Major Factors. So too, if specific locations are mentioned in several statements, the Minor Factors will be obvious. In general, however, you will find it more profitable to go through the set of statements quickly several times, looking for different types of statements each time, than you will by initially classifying each statement as you first encounter it.

## CHAPTER 4. DATA SUFFICIENCY

### A. THE STRUCTURE.

This section consists of 25 questions, with five options, A-E. The five options, A-E, are placed in a **fixed format**, which means that each letter means the same thing in all questions. In this sense, the section is similar to Analysis of Situations. Each of the 25 questions consists of two subparts, (1) and (2).

In each question, you are asked whether the data supplied in (1) is sufficient to answer the question which precedes both subparts. You are asked the same about the data supplied in (2). If only the data in (1) is sufficient, you pick "A". If only the data in (2) is sufficient, you pick "B".

If the data in both (1) and (2) is sufficient **independent of each other** to answer the question, you pick "D". If the data in (1) and (2) is sufficient **in combination**, you pick "C".

If the data in (1) and (2), considered separately, and in combination, is still **insufficient** to answer the question, you pick "E".

These rules may seem confusing, but it is **essential** that you **memorize** these rules **NOW**. If you are looking back to the definitions of the letters A-E during the test, you are wasting valuable time and you probably will be confused. While the definitions may seem obscure in the abstract, they will become very understandable as you begin practicing questions in the section.

Given so many subparts, and so many choices among the possible combinations of subparts, this section probably presents the most time pressure on the entire GMAT. One essential part of avoiding this time pressure is to **avoid computations.**

You are asked to decide whether **data is sufficient to answer the question**--not what the answer to the question actually is. Thus, this section, although it deals with math, is completely different from the Quantitative section which requires you to pick the actual answer.

This chapter will try to lessen these time pressures even more by familiarizing you with the types of questions which are asked over and over again in this section--and with the answers which are typically credited for each type of question.

Unlike other chapters, this one will not focus primarily on picking a particular letter. After all, there is no real difference between "A" and "B"--both indicate that one of the two subparts is sufficient to answer the question. Going a little bit farther, there is little practical difference between "A" or "B" and "D"--all three involve identifying a single subpart as sufficient, by itself, to answer the question.

It will be valuable to know if a type of question is an ABD question, in which case you can limit yourself to looking for separate subparts which will answer the question. This saves you the time of re-looking at the question to see if (1) and (2) **taken together** are sufficient to answer the question. Thus, if you know that a particulr question type is an ABD question type, you can immediately pick "E" if neither (1) nor (2) taken separately are sufficient to answer the question. By short-circuiting the complete directions for the section, you will save time without risking wrong answers in the short-cut.

Similarly, some types of questions are typically answered by "C" or "E". This means that separate subparts are normally **not sufficient** to answer the question. This means that when you encounter a CE question, you can look at the subparts in combination **FIRST** and decide whether the data in both subparts, taken together, is sufficient to answer the question. If it is not, you can pick "E" without examining the subparts separately.

Thus, this chapter will not be able to tell you whether a question is likely to be "A" or "B" or "D", but it will be able to tell you how to approach the question if it is an ABD question. So too, a CE question can be approached differently.

## B. THE OPTIONS.

The 25 answers are divided fairly evenly among A-E, although there has yet to be a section with 5 of each option credited as correct. **Each letter is credited as correct between 4 and 6 times on each section**, with the exception of 1 test with only 3 "B" answers and another with 7 "A" answers. However, since these were the two last forms of the GMAT I have reviewed, the test-makers may be varying the mix of answers more than previously. Therefore, you should feel uncomfortable only if you have fewer than 3 of any letter, or more than 7.

This section is more unusual than others, since there have been 5 questions on different sections which **were not scored.** This means that these questions were found to be **defective.** Normally this would indicate that the answer the test-makers planned to credit as correct was wrong. If you encountered this question, you may waste a lot of time puzzling over it, only to discover that it was not scored, after all. Thus, don't waste your time on a single question, you may be confused, but the test-makers may have been confused, instead.

This section is also unusual because it is fairly likely to contain **3 of the same answer in a row.** On the 20 sections I have reviewed, 9 had 3 of the same answer in a row; 2 of the early sections had 3-in-a-row twice. These answer rows have been "A", "B", or "D" (with 1 row of "C"). Therefore, do not worry if you have 1 run of 3 of the same letter once in the section. If you have two such rows, you probably should check both sets of 3 answers.

If you have 4 of the same answer, either you have made at least one mistake or the test-makers are really on a new kick!

## C. THE TRICKS.

As indicated above, the Tricks listed below are not as important in identifying a particular A-E answer as they are in identifying types of questions and categories of answers for those types. Thus, the section will be divided into subgroups of answer clusters. Within each answer cluster, the question types that fit this cluster will be identified, with the odds of various answers given.

Another way of viewing the section is to give each subpart of each question, (1) and (2), a **probabilitiy of being correct, by itself.** Thus, if the answer to a question was "D", each subpart has a 100% chance of being correct by itself, and together they require a "D" answer. Similarly, if the answer is "A", the two subparts have a 50% chance of being correct. If the answer is "C" or "E" the subparts have a 0% chance of being correct **independently.**

I will often provide you with the odds that each subpart will be correct by itself. For example, if a question type has an answer frequency of 3A, 2B, and 4D, the probability that any subpart of this type of question will be correct by itself is: 72% (13/18). Thus, when you find this type of question, you already know that it is very likely that each of the subparts will be correct. This can help you, as long as you don't jump to the conclusion that both subparts are correct just because the odds are so high.

I offer this additional way of looking at the section for your benefit. If you find it confusing, or worthless, then discard it!

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## 1. GIVE UP--Lots of "E" Answers.

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These questions, when they are encountered, should earn as little of your attention as possible. There is nothing more harmful than spending a lot of time looking for an answer that isn't there--unless it is picking an "A", "B", "C", or "D" when the answer is really "E". Therefore, these question types are offered as GIVE UP types--don't just mark "E" when you encounter them, but don't waste a lot of time looking for a specific answer if you don't find one quickly--the pattern of lots of "E" answers is just continuing.

**********

**a. Temperature.** **E .6**

**Frequency Breakdown of Trick:**

| A | B | C | D | E | All | %E |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 1 | - | - | 3 | 5 | 60% |

**********

This is the quintessential Give Up type of question. Normally you can't find out the answer because temperatures don't begin at 0, even though the normal scales relate to 0. This should be easier to understand for someone in the North, where sub-zero temperatures are common.

**********

**b. Clocks.** **E .6**

**Frequency Breakdown of Trick:**

| A | B | C | D | E | All | %E |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | - | - | - | 2 | 3 | 66.7% |

**********

Here, again, there is no base for time, even though each day begins at midnight. Similarly, each twelve-hour period occurs twice each day. This type of question occured only three times, and not on any recent tests. It is difficult to believe that it will appear again, but don't be caught napping--or wasting time.

**********

**c. Game Scores.** **E 1.0**

**Frequency Breakdown of Trick:**

| A | B | C | D | E | All | %E |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| - | - | - | - | 2 | 2 | 100% |

**********

This is another infrequent question-type. However, it has occured on a recent test.

**********

**d. Find the 2-digit Number. E .6**

**Frequency Breakdown of Tricks**

| A | B | C | D | E | All | %E |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| - | - | - | 1 | 2 | 2 | 66.7% |

**********

Yet another infrequent question type, but which has occured recently. This can be very time-consuming if you assume that there is a 2-digit number which you can't find.

**********

**e. Is it a Square? E .8**

**Frequency Breakdown of Tricks**

| A | B | C | D | E | All | %E |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| - | - | 1 | - | 4 | 5 | 80% |

**********

This question-type has occured only 5 times, but 4 of them were very difficult questions--at the end of the section. This means that most test-takers thought that some of the information was sufficient to define a square, when the information was insufficient. Notice that the only answer that was not "E" was "C". Thus, this question-type could be regarded as a CE type, except for the preponderance of "E" answers.

**********

**f. Fit in a Box? E .6**

**Frequency Breakdown of Tricks**

| A | B | C | D | E | All | %E |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| - | 2 | - | - | 4 | 6 | 66.7% |

**********

These questions ask how many books will fit in a drawer, or bricks in a box. In a sense, this is a three-dimensional extension of the "Is it a square" question-type, and with the same result of frequent "E" answers.

This Frequency Breakdown can be further broken down into easy and hard questions--early and late questions in the section. The "B" answers were easy questions early in the section. The "E" answers were in the second half of the section, and therefore relatively few test-takers got them right on the pretest.

This means that test-takers had a general tendency to decide that one or both of the subparts contained sufficient information. When the information was in a subpart, the question looked easy to the test-makers when they reviewed the pretest statistics. However, when the information was not in a subpart, the question looked hard.

This is a very good example of how you can use your knowledge of how hard a question is--based on pretest statistics--to decide the answer. Here, later questions of this type were always "E".

**********

**g. Interest, Commission. E .7**

**Frequency Breakdown of Tricks:**

| A | B | C | D | E | All | %E |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2 | 1 | - | 2 | 7 | 10 | 70% |

**********

These questions seem fairly familiar for people like yourself who want to go to business school. Yet they can be fairly difficult on the test if you don't quickly realize that most of them don't have sufficient information. (Sufficient information is relatively easy to spot, since you are just working with bases and percentages.)

Notice that "C" has never been an answer. This means you could consider them as ABD question-types. It also suggests that you would be wasting your time looking for a combination of subpart information after you have decided that the information in each subpart, considered separately, is insufficient.

This Trick can be valuable, since the questions, particularly with "E" as the answer, appeared late in the section and were therefore among the "harder questions."

++++++++++

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**2. DON'T GIVE UP--Eliminate "E".**

++++++++++

++++++++++

This is the flip-side of the previous question type. These questions have sufficient information provided in one or both of the subparts, either indpendently or considered together. Thus, just because the answer doesn't jump out at you, Don't Give Up. Answer "E" is probably not correct.

**********

**a. Tickets. E .0**

**Frequency Breakdown of Tricks:**

| A | B | C | D | E | All | %E |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2 | 2 | - | 1 | - | 5 | 0% |

**********

This question-type usually involves buying some tickets at adult prices and the rest at children's prices. This is also an ABD question-type, since there has yet to be either a "C" or "E" answer.

**********

**b. "ORIGINAL PRICE."** **E .0**

**Frequency Breakdown of Trick:**

| A | B | C | D | E | All | %E |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 1 | - | 2 | - | 4 | 0% |

**********

This is another ABD question-type with no "C" or "E" answers. Surprisingly, 3 of the 4 questions appeared in the second-half of the test and were relatively hard--based on pre-test data. This means that test-takers may have given up too soon, since the questions often look fairly complicated on first reading--but Don't Give Up.

**********

**c. "VALUE OF..."** **E .05**

**Frequency Breakdown of Trick:**

| A | B | C | D | E | All | %E |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 17 | 18 | 21 | 24 | 4 | 76 | 5.3% |

**********

This is a very common form of question, in which information is provided and you are asked "WHAT IS THE VALUE OF...?" Although you should not actually compute the value, you should be quite confident that there is sufficient information in the subparts, either taken independently or in combination. This makes sense. The test-makers have gone to the trouble of writing a question and asking you what the value of something is-- there probably is information provided to compute that value.

**********

**d. Triangles.** **E .08**

**Frequency Breakdown of Trick:**

| A | B | C | D | E | All | %E |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 14 | 12 | 12 | 7 | 4 | 49 | 8.2% |

**********

You probably haven't dealt with triangles much in college (unless you studied engineering) but they are frequent figures on the GMAT. You will be asked the triangle's area, perimeter, angle measures, side lengths, and whether it is equilateral or isosoles. You will also be given two triangles and asked whether lines are parallel, whether the triangles are equal, the ratios between them, and other miscellaneous questions.

If you are rusty about figuring out these quantities, you should brush up with the help of a math review book--perhaps **The Official Guide to GMAT.**

With the exception of angle measurements, these questions are usually relatively difficult, appearing late in the section. This probably reflects the unfamiliarity of most test-takers with triangles. It may also be a reflection of sex-bias, since women tend to do worse on geometry than they do on algebra.

In any event, it is quite likely that test-takers are giving up too soon. Virtually all of these triangle questions have ABCD answers. So don't YOU give up.

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## 3. CE Questions.

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These are question-types which typically have "C" or "E" as the answer. This means that, if there is sufficient information, it is contained in the **combination of subparts (1) and (2)**. If you can't figure out the answer using this combined information, you can probably pick "E".

Knowing this Trick can save you the time and anxiety of trying to figure out the answer using the information in each subpart separately. Of course, as you will see, some answers are "A", "B", or "D". However, I think that these will be fairly obvious to you as you look for the "C" Combination answer.

You might consider working each and every question by looking for "C" first, but I think that this would waste too much time and yield too few dividends. After all, "C" only appears as the correct answer about 20% of the time on the entire section. This list of question types identifies those with a greater chance of having "C" as the answer.

XXXX

**********

**b. Groups, Classes, Clubs.** **CE .6**

**Frequency Breakdown of Trick:**

| A | B | C | D | E | All | %CE |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 3 | 1 | 7 | 3 | 7 | 21 | **66.7%** |

**********

This is another typical CE question-type. You are given the number of people in a class and asked how many boys and girls there are, or how many people can be in two classes, or some other variation. You will normally need both subparts to answer this.

When I first divided the questions according to type, this Trick looked very strong. When I went back to find all the questions that could conceivably be put in such a classification, the Trick looked weaker. However, you should notice the classical CE question-type as you take the test.

**********

**c. "HOW MANY?"** **CE .5**

**Frequency Breakdown of Trick:**

| A | B | C | D | E | All | %CE |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 14 | 8 | 25 | 7 | 14 | 68 | **57.4%** |

**********

I discovered this Trick by accident. As I divided the questions into categories, I was left with a large number that didn't fit neatly into any category. Then I noticed that most of them asked "HOW MANY?" and had either "C" or "E" as an answer. When I went back to count the total number of "HOW MANY" questions, this Frequency Breakdown resulted.

If you see a question that looks a little different, and asks "HOW MANY?" check out "C" first.

**********

**d. Volume.** **CE .5**

**Frequency Breakdown of Trick:**

| A | B | C | D | E | All | %CE |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| - | 3 | 3 | 2 | 3 | 11 | **54.6%** |

**********

In these questions, you are giving a swimming pool and asked how long it takes to fill it, or a right-cylinder, or some other container, and asked the volume. Here, again, knowing whether this is a hard or easy question helps your odds. All three "B" answers were near the beginning of the section--and were therefore relatively easy.

**e. X = Number.** **CE .8**

**Frequency Breakdown of Trick:**

| A | B | C | D | E | All | %CE |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| - | - | 3 | 1 | 3 | 7 | **85.7%** |

These questions ask you whether X = 3, for example. They are normally algebra questions, and they are strong CE questions.

Notice, however, that the 1 exception is a "D" answer. This is one of the most confusing aspects of this entire section--keeping clear the difference between both subparts answering the question **independently** and **in combination.** There is no foolproof way of making the distinction. These Tricks may give you good odds if you are confused--they are not foolproof by themselves, however.

**f. "AVERAGE" in Query.** **CE .6**

**Frequency Breakdown of Trick:**

| A | B | C | D | E | All | %CE |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 5 | 2 | 3 | 1 | 7 | 16 | **62.5%** |

These questions have the word "AVERAGE" in the question. Usually the word will be followed by "(arithmetic mean)" as well. However, the test never used a different concept of average (such as median). When you see such a question, it is likely to be a CE type.

**g. Positive-Negative.** **CE .7**

**Frequency Breakdown of Trick:**

| A | B | C | D | E | All | %CE |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| - | 1 | 2 | 1 | 4 | 8 | **75%** |

These questions ask you whether a value is positive or negative. You should review the rules involved in deciding positive or negative values. They involve multiplying negative numbers, for example, or raising them to powers.

Often you will not know whether the quantity that is multiplied is positive or negative, in which case you can't tell the answer and pick "E". On the other hand, if the quantity is raised by an **even power**, it is always **positive.** An unspecified quantity raised by an **odd power** is not necessarily negative, however!

**h. Tests.** CE .6

**Frequency Breakdown of Trick:**

| | A | B | C | D | E | All | %CE |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | - | 3 | 2 | - | 4 | 9 | 66.7% |

This is an infrequent question, and an in-joke among test-makers. They tend to be relatively easy questions, so most test-takers are not taken in by the test-makers' inside tricks.

## 4. ABD Questions.

These are question-types which normally have information provided in one or both subparts that is sufficient, **taken independently**, to answer the question. In this section of the chapter, I will add a new statistic. This will represent the odds that one of the two subparts of the question will contain sufficient information by itself.

**a. 6-sided figure.** ABD 1.0

**Frequency Breakdown of Trick:**

% Suff.--.83

| | A | B | C | D | E | All | %ABD |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 1 | - | - | 2 | - | 3 | 100% |

This is called a hexagon, but you can recognize it as a six-sided figure--like a stop sign. When it is laced with diagonals, there are 24 equilateral triangles formed within it. This figure is a favorite of the test-makers on various math tests.

It is also a simple way to introduce the new **PERCENT SUFFICIENT** statistic.

**b. "HOW MANY."** ABD .7

**Frequency Breakdown of Trick:**

% Suff.--.48

| | A | B | C | D | E | All | %ABD |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 5 | 6 | 3 | 6 | 4 | 24 | 70.8% |

When I was tracking down the "HOW MANY" Trick, I also checked out the "HOW MUCH" questions. It turns out that this is more of an ABD question-type, but not a very strong one. This shows up in the % Suff. statistic.

**********

**c. Circles.** ABD .7

**Frequency Breakdown of Tricks:**

| % Suff.--.61 | A | B | C | D | E | All | %ABD |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | - | 4 | 1 | 9 | 4 | 18 | 72.2% |

**********

As with triangles, circles play a more important part on the GMAT than they probably have in the last four years, or the next three. Therefore, you should brush up on the basics of circle questions.

You will be asked the area and diameter; whether a point is on or in a circle; whether a circle is greater or less than another; to read circle graphs; and other circle questions.

There are occasionally "E" answers, but only 1 "C" answer to date.

**********

**d. Squares, Rectangles, Parallelograms.** ABD .7

**Frequency Breakdown of Tricks:**

| % Suff.--.54 | A | B | C | D | E | All | %ABD |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 4 | 5 | 2 | 8 | 4 | 23 | 73.9% |

**********

You should be sure of the definition of each of these terms. You have already learned that "IS...A SQUARE?" is a CE question. All other questions about these figures, such as the length of a side, the area, the perimeter, and other miscellaneous questions, such as "Is...a rectangle (or a parallelogram)" are ABD questions.

Only the miscellaneous questions had "E" for an answer, so DON'T GIVE UP!

**********

**e. Fraction, Percent, or Ratio in Question.** ABD .7

**Frequency Breakdown of Tricks:**

| % Suff.--.46 | A | B | C | D | E | All | %ABD |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 22 | 22 | 8 | 17 | 15 | 84 | 72.6% |

**********

These questions abound in this section. You are given a fraction, percent, or ratio in the question (different ways of saying the same thing) and you are asked a question.

If this is a very early, easy question, the information in the subpart may be a simple restatement of the information in the query. For example, if you are given 1/4 in the question, the subpart may have 25%. Don't laugh--just mark the correct answer and go on. Don't ask me why such trivial questions are on the GMAT--just gain the points available from such questions.

**f. Square root in answer.** **ABD 1.0**

**Frequency Breakdown of Trick:**

| % Suff.--.70 | A | B | C | D | E | All | %ABD |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 3 | 1 | - | 5 | - | 9 | 100% |

These questions may look intimidating when you first encounter them. They may be involved with triangles, or they may be involved with positive-negative oddities. But don't despair. There has always been sufficient information in at least one of the subparts.

However, you **cannot** simply pick the subpart with the square root in it. There have been some questions in which the square root subpart has been insufficient, or where the square root was in only one subpart, but "D" was the answer. But in any case: DON'T GIVE UP.

**g. Odd-Even.** **ABD .6**

**Frequency Breakdown of Trick:**

| % Suff.--.50 | A | B | C | D | E | All | %ABD |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 2 | 2 | 2 | 4 | 2 | 12 | 66.7% |

These questions ask you whether a quantity is odd or even. If it is multiplied by a number, or raised by a power, that is **even**, it is even. If it is multiplied by a number, or raised by a power, that is odd, you cannot tell--unless you know whether the quantity itself is odd or even.

You should practice these in connection with the positive-negative questions, but remember that those were CE questions, while these are ABD questions.

**h. Consecutive Integers.** **ABD 1.0**

**Frequency Breakdown of Trick:**

| % Suff.--.50 | A | B | C | D | E | All | %ABD |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 1 | 1 | - | 2 | - | 4 | 100% |

You should be sure of the meaning of each of these terms. These will sometimes be questions about a sequence. They may also involve averages.

NOTE: the average of an **odd** number of consecutive integers is always the middle integer in the series; the average of an **even** number of consecutive integers always has a fraction or decimal.

**********

**i. __ =/= 0.** **ABD 1.0**

**Frequency Breakdown of Tricks:**

| % Suff.--.69 | A | B | C | D | E | All | %ABD |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 5 | - | - | 3 | - | 8 | **100%** |

**********

This rather wierd word-processing designation is only slightly more intimidating than the actual symbols may appear on the GMAT. All this means is that the algebra symbols in the blanks do not compute to equal zero. Normally this will be a multiplication computation.

Recognize that this type of question is an ABD question, with a high probability that each subpart is sufficient to answer the question.

I haven't noticed any questions where omitting the "not equal to zero" symbols has amounted to a trick question on the test. Remember, a sufficient number of test-takers has to answer each question correctly on the pre-test, so obscure trick questions won't fare very well on the pre-test and won't make it onto the scored sections of the test.

**********

**j. "DIVISIBLE BY."** **ABD .8**

**Frequency Breakdown of Tricks:**

| % Suff.--.88 | A | B | C | D | E | All | %ABD |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 1 | - | - | 3 | 1 | 5 | **80%** |

**********

These questions ask the simple question of whether one quantity is divisible by another. The answer is a straightforward one found in one or both subparts.

**********

**k. Elections.** **ABD .8**

**Frequency Breakdown of Tricks:**

| % Suff.--.88 | A | B | C | D | E | All | %ABD |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | - | - | 1 | 4 | - | 5 | **80%** |

**********

These questions ask how many votes a candidate received. They may be accompanied by a chart. In the 5 questions that have appeared, both subparts contained relevant information--in 4 questions each subpart was sufficient independently, in 1 question both subparts together were sufficient.

This question-type is an important one for distinguishing between independent and combined subparts. Here you should look at each independently and only in combination if the independent check doesn't provide sufficient information.

You should not give up, but you should also not begin with the combination check. This is a different strategy than the one to be followed for CE questions.

## D. EXAMPLES OF TRICKS FROM PUBLISHED GMAT MATERIALS.

Abbreviations Used:

**SQ--Sample Question.** Contained in the **Bulletin of Information** for the GMAT.

All other questions are from the sample sections in **The Official Guide to GMAT.**

**X** These questions appear to fit the Tricks, but have answers that do not fit the Tricks. You should study these questions with particular care to be sure that you will be able to identify the questions which do not fit the Tricks.

### 1. GIVE UP--Lots of "E" Answers.

**a. Temperature.** E.6
I. 28
II. 13
A 13

**b. Time.** E .6
III. 20%

**c. Game Scores.** E 1.8
A 6

**d. Find the 2-digit number.** E .66
A 19%
C 7

**e. Is it a Square?** E .8
No Examples in Published GMAT Materials.

**f. Fit in a Box?** E .6
III. 18%

**g. Interest, Commission.** E .7
C %6

**2. DON'T GIVE UP--Eliminate "E".**

**a. Tickets. E .8**
I. 2
II. 7
C 4

**b. "ORIGINAL PRICE." E.8**
No Examples in Published GMAT Materials.

**c. "VALUE OF..." E .85**
SQ 12, 13*
I. 16, 25, 27
II. 26, 27*, 30
III. 7, 14, 16*, 17, 19, 21, 28
A 118
B 1, 14, 19, 21
C 1, 11, 12, 15

**d. Triangles. E .88**
I. 29, 30
II. 15, 27*
III. 7, 28
A 15, 25
C 8, 16*, 24

**3. CE Questions.**

**a. Travel. CE .5**
I. 15, 20*
II. 18, 28*
III. 9*
A 16*
B 2, 6, 8
C 13*

**b. Groups, Classes, Clubs. CE .6**
I. 1*
III. 6, 23*
A 24*
B 15*, 18
C 10, 23

**c. "HOW MANY?" CE .5**
I. 4, 7, 26*
II. 1*, 3*, 9*, 10, 14*
III. 10, 18, 20*, 25
A 1, 5, 22*
B 17*
C 4*, 9*, 10, 23

d. Volume. CE .5
I. 14

e. X = Number. CE .8
III. 2
A 2
C 7

f. "AVERAGE" in Query. CE .6
I. 5, 18
II. 18
III. 6, 9%, 23%
A 16%, 18%
B 2, 13%
C 13%, 17%

g. Positive-Negative. CE .7
II. 11

h. Tests. CE .6
A 9%
B 13

4. ABD Questions.

a. 6-sided figure. ABD 1.8
No Examples in Published GMAT Materials.

b. "HOW MUCH?" ABD .7
I. 9
III. 1, 11
B 5%

c. Circles. ABD .7
SQ 16
I. 9, 13
II. 5, 12
III. 22%
A 22
B 7
C 5%

d. Squares, Rectangles, Parallelograms. ABD .7
II. 6, 22
III. 24, 26%
A 5%
B 10, 11

e. Fraction, Percent, or Ration in Question. ABD .7
SQ 16
I. 3, 8, 10%, 18%, 20
II. 2%, 21%
III. 8, 10%, 29

A 4, 9, 11, 14, 23
B 15
C 14%, 16%

f. Square root in Answer. ABD 1.0
A 17

g. Odd-Even. ABD .6
III. 27
B 9, 23%
C 19

h. Consecutive Integers. ABD 1.0
SQ 14

i. __ =/= 0. ABD 1.0
II. 17
III. 8, 14, 19
B 14

j. *DIVISIBLE BY. ABD .8
I. 21

k. Elections. ABD .8
I. 6%
C 22

## E. COMMENTARY ON THE TRICKS.

**I. 28.** This question fits the GIVE UP pattern, but you can use another strategy to select the correct answer to this question, and to others at the end of the section.

Put simply, this question looks like there is enough information to answer the question with the information provided--therefore there isn't. This strategy depends upon the guessing strategy of test-takers on the pre-test. Since the question looks like it has sufficient information, test-takers probably picked "C", I would guess. Since "C" was the wrong answer, the question was placed at the end of the section. You can rely on this late placement in the section to follow a guessing strategy that is different from the one followed by test-takers on the pre-test.

You can use a similar strategy on other questions at the end of the strategy. For example, if a question looks like you could not possibly answer the question on the basis of the information provided, you can.

In general, the answer to hard questions at the end of the section is the opposite of your first impression. You can depend upon your first impression to identify the answer people probably picked on the pre-test. Since the question is a hard question,

at the end of the section, most people picked the wrong answer. You can avoid the obvious answer and probably end up picking the correct answer.

This strategy can be used on **the last five questions** in the section. **Remember**, you will probably do better with a random guess than you will with a first impression guess. Your best bet is to consciously decide what others would guess and guess the opposite.

**III. 20.** This question fits the Clocks GIVE UP pattern even though the answer is "A". This is because you must give up on the information in (2).

When you encounter this question, you should immediately ask: why is this question #20 in the section. Since (1) is a straightforward answer to the question, it can't be the hard aspect of the question. You can then recognize that people on the pre-test probably jumped to the conclusion that (2) was also sufficient, since it seems to echo the information in (1), and picked "D" as the answer. This could not be the correct answer, or the question would be among the first on the section.

After you have gone through this analysis, the correct answer should be obvious to you. Even though the question is not among the last five on the section, you can still use your estimate of its relative difficulty to avoid falling into the trap which enticed so many on the pre-test.

**I. 27.** You don't need **the Official Guide to GMAT** to tell you this is a difficult question. Any question #27 is a difficult question. You task is to find out why it is difficult.

In this case, (1) looks like sufficient information. If it was, many people would have picked it and it wouldn't be an easy question. Then you can recognize the **positive/negative** trick involved in **squares**. Once you realize why this is a difficult question, rather than the easy question it appears to be, you should be able to find the correct answer.

**II. 26.** This question **looks impossible**--therefore it is easy! It is so easy that "D" is the correct answer. You don't necessarily have to figure out why each subpart is sufficient--just that the first impression of insufficient information is wrong because it is so obvious. Obvious answers are wrong on the last five questions.

**II. 27.** By contrast, this question looks like it should have sufficient information--therefore it doesn't. You can Pick "E" because few people probably did on the pre-test.

**III. 7.** This question is a simple geometry question that asks the "VALUE OF X." Since it is early in the section, you should not be looking for any hidden tricks. Even though you could figure out the exact angle of X, you only have to know there is sufficient information.

Be careful. You **cannot** use the corner of your test booklet to measure angles in this section. You could figure out the exact angle of X, but you are asked about sufficient information in this section--exact answers are not required.

**II. 15.** This is a good question to review the **right triangle** and to recall how little information is necessary to fill in the complete specifications of the triangle. As son as you see a right angle of 90 degrees, or the 3, 4, 5 ratio among the sides, lookf for a right triangle. Be careful, however, since only a right angle could be an isosceles triangle.

**I. 13.** This question is a good one to review the formulas for a circle. The information provided in the first sentence of the question is worse than useless--it wastes your time.

**I. 18.** This question introduces a completely novel definition "SILVER" innto the test. Don't worry that you don't know the meaning of some esoteric definition. Such a definition will always be defined in the question. Just read carefully.

**III. 8.** This is another question with answers that are so straightforward that it is hard to believe. The only danger in this question is that the obvious nature of (1) may cause you to skip (2).

Remember that you can **never** pick "A" without first looking at (2) to see if "D" might be the answer.

**II. 17.** In this type of question, with specific values given for both of the unknowns in the question, you need to ask yourself if you can get by with only one of the specific numbers. If so, this would explain why such a seemingly obvious question could appear as late as #17 in the section.

Usually this will involve **cancelling equal values.** In this instance, you need to recognize that the square root of Z to the 4th power is z squared--which also appears in the denomenator.

## CHAPTER 5. PROBLEM SOLVING

### A. THE STRUCTURE.

There are two Problem Solving sections on each GMAT, each with 28 questions. If you have a Problem Solving pretest section, you will have three Problem Solving sections, but only two will count toward your score. When combined with the Data Sufficiency section, **the GMAT has a heavy math orientation.**

You should brush up on your basic math concepts--some of which you haven't used since high school. The test does not ask things that are above high school math level. The test involves rapid application of math, rather than complicated math or sophisticated questions.

The Problem Solving sections require you to pick **the exact answer** to math questions. The answers are all found in one of the options, A-E.

In some instances, you will have to **figure the exact answer** to questions. In others, you should only **estimate the answer.** If you try to figure out the exact answer to each question during the test, you will never finish the sections.

This chapter will tell you which questions require computation and which do not. If computation is required, you should begin computing as you read the question; if it is not required, you should recognize that none is required as soon as you begin reading the question.

### B. The OPTIONS.

The 28 options in each section are divided fairly evenly among A-E. However, there has yet to be a section with 4 of each option. The most "A", "C" or "E" answers on any section has been 5. The most "B" or "D" answers has been 6.

On the low side this section is unusual because there have been **several** sections with **only 2** of a certain letter--sometimes only 2 of two different letters.

You should not be surprised to find only 2 of a certain option on your answer sheet once you have finished the section. You should be worried only if you pick a letter only 1 time, or more than 6 times.

The section is also unusual because of the **large number of** 3-in-a-row combinations of a single letter. This has occured 1[illegible] times on the sections I have reviewed. Only option "A" has never appeared 3 times in a row--and there seems to be no reason why it could not do so on your test. So don't worry if you have 3-in-a-row on this section, even twice in the same section. If you have 4-in-a-row, however, check all 4 answers.

Overall, I have reviewed 38 Problem Solving sections. The first 10 GMAT forms had only one Problem Solving section with 30 questions. Of the 38 sections, 11 had "B" for the answer of the **first question** in the section. You should not just guess "B", since this is the easiest question in the section and should be a snap. However, you may save a few seconds if you look at "B" first.

## C. THE TRICKS.

The main Trick in this section is **wise time management.** The **best** way to manage your time wisely is to know when to **estimate** and when to **compute.** Of course, it doesn't hurt to know the answer frequency for various types of questions, either. But **these frequencies should be used to direct your scanning of the options,** not as gambling strategies.

More than any other section, this one should be approached by **noticing the difficulty of the question** to be answered. As you should recall, **easy questions** are at the **beginning** of the section, **hard ones** are at the **end.** The difficulty is based on the pre-test, when test-takers answered the questions as part of an actual GMAT, but did not have the answers counted toward their score. You should approach each question with the knowledge that most test-takers answered it correctly (if it is an early, easy question) or incorrectly (if it is a late, hard question).

For example, the questions on the **first page** of each section are the **easiest** on the section. Although you have 35 minutes to answer 20 questions in the section, you should not divide your time evenly among all 20 questions. The first page may only take you 1 minute, since the answers are all easy and you can quickly pick the obvious correct answer. This will give you more time to spend on the last questions. You may be able to spend 3 minutes on some questions if you have managed your time correctly.

**********
**1. Measuring Angles, Lengths--Use the corner of the test booklet.**
**********

Most of the geometry figures drawn on the GMAT Problem Solving section are **drawn to scale.** If they are not drawn to scale, this will be stated clearly at the bottom of the figure. If no statement appears at the bottom of the figure, it is drawn to scale. This means that you can measure the angles and lengths in the figure if you have a protracter and a ruler.

Fortunately, you can make a protracter/ruler from your test booklet! Simply tear a corner of your test booklet so that one side is at least 2 inches long. Then, **NEATLY fold the corner** in half. You now can measure **90 degree** and **45 degree** angles. Fold the corner again, and you can measure **22 1/2 degrees.** These three angle sizes will be sufficient to answer the questions on the Quantitative section. There are no questions which have angle measurements that are so close to each other than this protracter will be too imprecise to answer.

This same piece of test-booklet will serve as a ruler. You can mark lengths on the edge with your pencil. The lengths will be different enough so that your makeshift ruler will be able to identify the answer.

This Trick is very satisfying to apply. You will be sure to pick the right answer and you won't have to waste time or thought on the question.

**********
**2. Figure Not Drawn to Scale & "CANNOT BE DETERMINED": Pick "E"**
**********

As mentioned above, most geometry figures on the Problem Solving section are drawn to scale. However, some are clearly marked as "Figure Not Drawn to Scale." Often these figures will be followed by answer options which include "CANNOT BE DETERMINED." When this occurs, pick "E". Obvious as this trick may seem, it works!

**********
**3. "CANNOT BE DETERMINED," "NONE OF THE ABOVE"--Pick "E": E .6**
**Frequency Breakdown of Trick:**

"NONE OF THE ABOVE": 1-10

| A | B | C | D | E | All | %E |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 3 | 1 | - | - | 4 | 8 | **50%** |

"CANNOT BE DETERMINED": 1-10

| A | B | C | D | E | All | %E |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 3 | - | 1 | - | 8 | 12 | **66.7%** |

"CANNOT BE DETERMINED": 11-20

| A | B | C | D | E | All | %E |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 3 | 4 | 5 | 2 | 3 | 17 | **17.7%** |

**********

You will encounter a few questions that contain one of these two statements as answer "E". When you encounter this option in a question, make particular note of the difficulty of the question. It turns out that focusing on the difficulty of the question can help you select the correct answer.

It appears that test-takers have a strong tendency to give up on such questions and to select "E" on the pretest. This means that when "E" is the **correct answer**, the question appears to be **easy**; when "E" is the **wrong answer**, the question appears to be **difficult**--because test-takers gave up and selected "E" on the pretest.

You can beat the test-makers by focusing on the placement of the question in the section.

If the question appears as number 1-10, the answer is probably "E".

If it appears as 11-20, the answer is unlikely to be "E", but rather one of the 4 specific answers provided.

Notice that all of the "NONE OF THE ABOVE" questions appeared in the first half of the section and half of the answers were "E".

**********

**4. Unknowns in Answer--Pick "A", "E": AE .6**

**Frequency Breakdown of Trick:**

| | A | B | C | D | E | All | %AE |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 19 | 7 | 7 | 6 | 12 | 51 | **60.8%** |
| 1-10 | A | B | C | D | E | All | %AE |
| | 6 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 3 | 14 | **64.3%** |
| 11-20 | A | B | C | D | E | All | %AE |
| | 13 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 9 | 37 | **59.5%** |

**********

These questions have answers that look like questions--full of letters and symbols, often in fractions or with parentheses. These are usually formulas which express the relationships between quantities mentioned in the question.

You will probably find it helpful to write your own formula expressing the relationship as you read the question and then looking for your formula among the answers. You are less likely to pick a wrong answer than if you just read the question and then pick among the alternatives--then the confusing nature of the multiple unknowns will be greatest for you.

This Trick is very valuable for what it tells you about the entire section. Most of the questions in the section have numbers as answers. The options are arranged in order, Low-High, or High-Low. These options are not chosen arbitrarily, but are the result of computational errors you are likely to make on the question. When you make a predictable error--your answer is on the test. This means that numerical answers tend to have answers that cluster at "B", "C", and "D". This is because there is usually at least one computational mistake that produces an answer that is too high; and a mistake that produces an answer that is too low.

In order to balance the answers on the section evenly among A-E, the test-makers are forced to place the correct answer to questions without numbers that must be ordered at "A" and "E". This is why this Trick works so well.

This Trick should also give you a good clue for other answers with non-numerical answers--Pick "A" and "E". If you encounter a numerical question that does not fit one of the specific Tricks in this chapter--Pick "B", "C", or "D".

xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx

**5. "GREATEST," "MAXIMUM":**

1-10, Pick "B", "D"; 11-20, Eliminate "E".
L-H, Pick "D"; H-L, Eliminate "D", "E".

**Frequency Breakdown of Tricks:**

| 1-10 | A | B | C | D | E | All | %BD |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 1 | 5 | 1 | 4 | 2 | 13 | 69.2% |
| **11-20** | **A** | **B** | **C** | **D** | **E** | **All** | **%E** |
| | 4 | 1 | 3 | 4 | - | 12 | 0% |

**Frequency Breakdown of Tricks:**

| L-H | A | B | C | D | E | All | %D |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 3 | 4 | 2 | 8 | 2 | 19 | 42.1% |
| **H-L** | **A** | **B** | **C** | **D** | **E** | **All** | **%DE** |
| | 2 | 2 | 2 | - | - | 6 | 0% |

xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx

There have been 25 questions which ask for the "GREATEST" or "MAXIMUM" value. These questions can be usefully divided into those that appear in the first half of the section and those that appear in the second half.

The first half has a preponderance of "B" and "D" answers. This is a fairly typical pattern for this type of question, as I have discovered on other math-type sections. Those who took the pretest apparently followed this pattern and picked the correct answer often.

On the second half of the test these questions do not have a majority of "B" or "D" answers, but do have an absence of "E" answers. You can improve your odds on this type of question if you follow different strategies for the two halves of the test.

These questions can also be divided into those which arrange the options from Low to High as opposed to those which arrange the options from High to Low. There are significantly different answer patterns in the two types of questions. This Trick can be used in conjunction with the previous division into section halves.

**********

**6. "LEAST," "MINIMUM": L-H, Pick "C"; H-L, Eliminate "B," "C"**

**Frequency Breakdown of Trick:**

| | A | B | C | D | E | All | %C |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| L-H | 4 | 4 | 7 | 3 | 1 | 19 | 36.8% |
| H-L | 1 | - | - | 1 | 2 | 4 | 0% |

**********

There is no pattern for this type of question involving the section halves (or difficulty). However, there is a difference in the pattern of answers, depending on whether options are arranged from Low to High or High to Low.

**********

**7. "AVERAGE". 1-10, Eliminate "C"; 11-20, Pick "C". L-H, Pick "A"; H-L, Pick "B" or "D".**

**Frequency Breakdown of Trick:**

| | A | B | C | D | E | All | %C |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1-10 | 4 | 2 | - | 3 | 1 | 10 | 0% |
| 11-20 | 1 | 1 | 2 | - | - | 4 | 50% |
| L-H | 5 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 14 | 35.7% |
| H-L | - | 1 | - | 1 | - | 2 | 100% |

**********

This is a very interesting pattern, at least for me. On the first half of the section, questions which ask for the "AVERAGE" have never had a correct answer of "C". On the second half, 2 of the 4 questions that asked for the "AVERAGE" had "C" as the correct answer. This may be a result of the guessing patterns of test-takers on the pre-test. In any case, you can benefit from this knowledge as you take the test.

The pattern for High to Low options follows the 1-10 pattern, with "B" or "D" answers. The Low to High options, however, follow a Pick "A" pattern.

**********

**8. "AVERAGE SPEED"--Eliminate "C": C .86**

**Frequency Breakdown of Tricks:**

| | A | B | C | D | E | All | %C |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 5 | 3 | 1 | 5 | 2 | 16 | 6.3% |

**********

This Trick is an extension of the "AVERAGE" Trick, but a much stronger one. Notice that it differs from the "AVERAGE" Trick because there are more "A" answers than "B" answers. It is similar to the "AVERAGE" Trick insofar as "D" answers are frequent.

**********

**9. "APPROXIMATE":**

**1-10, Pick "A"; 11-20, Eliminate "E".**
**L-H, Pick "C"; H-L, Pick "A", Eliminate "C","E".**

**Frequency Breakdown of Tricks:**

| | A | B | C | D | E | All | %A |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1-10 | 5 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 3 | 13 | 38.5% |
| 11-20 | A | B | C | D | E | All | %E |
| | 5 | 7 | 7 | 3 | - | 22 | 0% |
| L-H | A | B | C | D | E | All | %C |
| | 5 | 7 | 9 | 4 | 3 | 28 | 32.1% |
| H-L | A | B | C | D | E | All | %A |
| | 5 | 1 | - | 1 | - | 7 | 71.4% |

**********

There were 35 questions which specifically asked you to provide the "APPROXIMATE" answer to the question. The "APPROXIMATE" answer is provided in the options. Often these questions will also involve fractions, thus necessitating the "APPROXIMATE" answer.

Most of these questions appeared in the second half of the test, indicating that they were relatively hard. Here again, you should follow different strategies in different parts of the section.

When the questions are divided according to Low to High options or High to Low options, a different pattern emerges.

As with all of the Tricks in this part of the chapter, the Tricks for section hayles and option arrangements should be **memorized together**, so that you can improve on both types of Tricks by using each of them in combination.

**********

**10. Percentages in All Options: Pick "B", "D". H-L, Pick "D".**
**Frequency Breakdown of Tricks:**

| | A | B | C | D | E | All | %BD |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 11 | 18 | 11 | 18 | 9 | 67 | **53.7%** |
| Horizontal | A | B | C | D | E | All | %BD |
| | 5 | 11 | 5 | 13 | 4 | 38 | **63.2%** |
| Vertical | A | | | | | | |
| | 6 | | | | | | |
| | B | | | | | | |
| | 7 | | | | | | |
| | C | | | | | | |
| | 6 | | | | | | |
| | D | | | | | | |
| | 5 | | | | | | |
| | E | | All | %BD | | | |
| | 5 | | 29 | **41.4%** | | | |
| L-H | A | B | C | D | E | All | %BD |
| | 8 | 16 | 11 | 13 | 8 | 56 | **51.8%** |
| H-L | A | B | C | D | E | All | %BD |
| | 3 | 2 | - | 5 | 1 | 11 | **63.6%** |

**********

A large number of questions have Percentages in the answer options. These can usefully be divided by the High to Low or Low to High arrangement of answers.

They can also be divided according to the format of the answers on the test-booklet page. Most answer options are arranged along a single line of type, as the letter options are arranged in this book. However, a large number of the questions have the answers arranged vertically on the page.

Notice that the BD pattern exists only on the **HORIZONTALLY** arranged answers. The **vertically** arranged options have no pattern of answers to depend on.

**********

**11. Widely-Spaced Alternatives--Pick "D": D .3**
**Frequency Breakdown of Tricks:**

| | A | B | C | D | E | All | %D |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 3 | 7 | 4 | 10 | 6 | 30 | **33.3%** |

**********

These questions have answer options that look imposing when you first read them. Often they have ,000 at the end of each option. Rather than be intimidated by such large figures, just cross out the zeros and look at what is left. These are widely-spaced alternatives. You should use your approximation skills to identify the answer. The options will be far enough apart that exact computations will not be necessary and will waste time.

The tendency for "D" to be the answer is not a strong one, but it is consistent with the time-wasting nature of these questions--the fourth option is the most frequent answer.

**********

**12. Sequences--Eliminate "A": A .8**

**Frequency Breakdown of Trick:**

| A | B | C | D | E | All | %A |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| - | 5 | 3 | 5 | 3 | 16 | **0%** |

**********

These questions involve sequences of numbers which you are asked to extend, or perhaps to identify the nth term in the sequence. You should be careful that the sequence **need not be consecutive** integers (although consecutive integers are themselves a sequence).

You may have to do some quick computations, but you may also have to estimate the answer. You will know which you should do by **reviewing the answer options**. In any event, you can eliminate "A", at least you could have on the first 20 GMAT forms that have been released.

**********

**13. Investment Yields--Eliminate "E": E.03**

**Frequency Breakdown of Trick:**

| A | B | C | D | E | All | %E |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 5 | 7 | 9 | 10 | 1 | 32 | **3.1%** |

**********

These questions are probably familiar to people like you who want to go to business school. They are similar to other percentage or fraction questions, but they may involve more than one year, and therefore more than one computation--or more preferably an intelligent estimation of the answer.

The answers cluster at D, C, and B. The simplest Trick, however, is to eliminate "E". The only "E" answer was question 1 in one section--the easiest question (where Tricks shouldn't be necessary).

**********

**14. PI--Pick "B"; Don't Pick PI: B .3; PI .2**

**Frequency Breakdown of Trick:**

| A | B | C | D | E | All | %B |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 4 | 9 | 3 | 3 | 4 | 23 | **39.1%** |

| Not all PI options: | PI answer | Not PI answer | All | %PI |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 3 | 8 | 11 | **27.3%** |

**********

PI is that endless decimal 3.1416 etc. that is involved in computing the circumference and area of a circle. All you need to know for the GMAT is that it is **about 3**. You should review the formulas for the circumference and area of circles.

Aside from the Frequency Breakdown of the answers which identifies "B" as the most frequent answer, I found another interesting pattern among the answer options.

Often the symbol for PI appears in some, but not all answer options. When this occurs, the correct answer is usually an options which does not include PI. This means that test-takers are often intimidated by the appearance of PI, forget its actual involvement in the circle computations, and pick an answer with PI just because they figure that their unfamiliarity is unusual and that the answer probably includes PI. Most of the time these test-takers are wrong.

Therefore, **avoid picking an answer with PI** in it unless you are **sure** that PI is involved in the answer. This is similar to picking a Reading Comprehension answer with an unfamiliar word--don't just assume that everyone else knows the answer but you.

**********

**15. Substitute for X: Start Right Away!**

**********

These questions ask you to substitute specific numbers for specified letters in an algebra equation. This definitely **requires you to perform computations.**

The Trick in these questions is: **plug in the values on your test booklet as soon as you read the question.** This is often made difficult by the test-makers by the way the question is placed on the page. Typically it is placed horizontally in only two or three lines--stuffed between other questions so you almost miss it. Placed in such a cramped space, the question does not invite substitutions in the test booklet. Nevertheless, this is what you should do.

**********

**16. TRUE-FALSE Questions.** **Eliminate "A": A .0**
**Pick TRUE: T .6**

**Frequency Breakdown of Trick:**

| | A | B | C | D | E | All | %A |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | - | 2 | 3 | 5 | 5 | 15 | 0% |

| | I | II | III | All | %T |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| TRUE | 9 | 10 | 10 | 29 | |
| FALSE | 6 | 5 | 5 | 16 | 64.4% |

**********

This section contains TRUE-FALSE questions scored in groups. These have answers preceded by Roman Numerals with answer options that force choices among the Roman Numerals.

There is a general tendency **in this section** for the Roman Numerals to be TRUE--about 2 to 1 odds. Correct answers tend to be "D" and "E". There were 3 questions with 3 TRUE Roman Numerals, but only 4 with just 1 TRUE Roman Numeral.

## D. EXAMPLES OF TRICKS FROM PUBLISHED GMAT MATERIALS.

Abbreviations used:

**SQ Sample Question** contained in the **Bulletin of Information** for the GMAT.

All other questions are from the sample sections in **The Official Guide to GMAT.**

***** These questions appear to fit the Tricks, but have answers that do not fit the Tricks. You should study these questions with particularq care to be sure that you will be able to identify questions which do not fit the Tricks.

**1. Measuring Angles, Lengths--Use the corner of the test booklet.**
I. 11, 24
II. 5
A $2 3, $6 5
B $5 3, 8, 20
C $2 13, $4 10, 20

**2. Figure Not Drawn to Scale & "CANNOT BE DETERMINED": Pick "E".**
No Examples in published GMAT Materials.

**3. "CANNOT BE DETERMINED," "NONE OF THE ABOVE."**
**First Half--Pick "E" E .6**
**Second Half--Eliminate "E" E .1**
I. 19%
II. 8
III. 25%
A $6 4
B $1 2, 12, $5 2%, 5
C $2 6%, 18%, $4 4, 17

**4. Unknowns in Answer--Pick "A", "E": E .6**
I. 9%, 15%
II. 9%, 17, 20, 22%, 24%, 25%
III. 20
A $2 4%, 8, 17
B $1 3
C $2 12, $4 18%

**5. "GREATEST," "MAXIMUM":**
**1-10, Pick "B", "D"; 11-20, Eliminate "E".**
**L-H, Pick "D"; H-L, Eliminate "D", "E".**
SQ 20%
I. 25
II. 4%, 24
A $2 12%, $6 3, 16
C $2 2

```
6.  "LEAST," "MINIMUM" L-H, Pick "C"; H-L, Eliminate "B", "C"
II. 16%
III. 10
A $2 17, $6 8
B $5 5

7.  "AVERAGE".  1-10, Eliminate "C"; 11-20, Pick "C"
                L-H,  Pick "A";       H-L, Pick "B", "D"
II. 11
A $2 6, $6 1%, 15%
B $1 2%, $5 7%
C $4 9

8.  "AVERAGE SPEED."  Eliminate "C"  C .86
I. 7

9.  "APPROXIMATE":
              1-10, Pick "A"; 11-20, Eliminate "E".
              L-H,  Pick "C"; H-L,   Pick "A", Eliminate "D","E".
I. 7%, 13%
II. 12
III. 4%
A $2 18
B $5 6%, 13

10. Percentages in All Options:  Pick "B", "D"
                                 H-L, Pick "D"
SQ 18
I. 4%, 10%
II. 3%, 10%
III. 4%
A $2 2%, 11%, 18%, $6 20
B $5 6%, 12
C $2 11, $4 7%

11. Widely-Spaced Alternatives--Pick "D":  D .3
I. 6%, 24%
II. 1%
III. 6%, 7
A $2 13
B $1 4, 17, $5 10%
C $2 8%, $4 14%

12. Sequences--Eliminate "A":  A .8
A $6 B
B $1 12
C $4 18

13. Investment Yields--Eliminate "E":  E .03
A $2 13, $6 12
B $1 16, $5 11
C $4 11
```

**14. PI--Pick "B"; Don't Pick PI: B .3; PI .2**
I. 28, 30*
II. 23
A $6 2, 17
B $1 19
C $2 15

**15. Substitute for X: Start Right Away!**
A $2 1. 14
B $1 5, $5 19
C $2 6, $4 1

**16. TRUE-FALSE Questions--Eliminate "A": A .8**
**Pick TRUE: T .6**
I. 23, 28
III. 3
A $2 15
B $5 7

## E. COMMENTARY ON THE TRICKS.

**I. 11.** This triangle looks imposing, but if you just measure the base of the triangle with the corner of your test booklet, the answer is a snap--no math involved. Notice that the options in A-E are so widely spaced that you can't make a mistake in measurement that will affect your answer.

**I. 24.** Your test booklet corner will come in very handy here--to answer a difficult question without any thought. Here, again, the distances in the answer choices are far enough apart to avoid any chance for measurement error.

NOTE: The figures in **Problem Solving** sections are drawn to scale, unless otherwise noted in the test. However, the figures in **Data Sufficiency** sections are only drawn to conform to the original information--not necessarily to the information in (1) and (2). Thus, you can use your measuring Tricks on the Problem Solving section only.

**I. 19.** This question is a good one to remember--it gives you general information about the relationship between averages and totals for an **odd** number of numbers.

**III. 25.** This question is an exception to the Trick. This just points up the general fact that all of these Tricks have had, or could have, exceptions to them. Here you must guess how the people on the pre-test guessed and do the opposite. Here, people probably thought there ws sufficient information and guessed among A-D.

**III. 28.** This is a question that can be answered by combining two Tricks. The Unknowns in the answer make "A" and "E" likely choices. However, "E" is Cannot Be Determined. Since this is a

hard question, Cannot be Determined is wrong, "H" is left--and is correct.

I. 6. This question should be recognized as a widely-spaced alternative question **before you start calculating.** Once you do so, you can cross out all the numbers after the commas.

III. 6;96 1. These questions involve widely-spaced alternatives and decimals. They are very easy questions. You should be comfortable learning this much about decimals and no more. There are not difficult questions involving decimals in this section.

II. 23. This is a good question to use **three basic approximations.**
1) **PI = about 3;**
2) **Square Root of 2 = about 1.4;**
3) **Square Root of 3 = about 1.7.**

You can use these approximate values to plug into the fractions in the answer choices. You can measure the triangle to help your approximations of the correct answer.

## CHAPTER 6. READING COMPREHENSION

### A. THE STRUCTURE.

This section consists of three reading passages and 25 questions following the passages. **The main Trick of this section is wisely managing your time.** If you do, you will have adequate time to consider the questions following the last passage.

You can manage your time by allocating the 30 minutes among the three passages based on your **familiarity with the subject matter** of each passage. Ordinarily you will be able to work more quickly on passages with familiar subjects--unfamiliar subjects will usually take you more time to complete. **Thus, as you begin the section, flip through the three passages** just to make note of the topics covered in each.

A list of the topics covered in previous sections is included below. As you read through the list of previos topics, make a mental note of which topics would be familiar to you and which would probably take you more time. This will be good practice for the actual test.

You can also manage your time by **identifying those questions which reward a rereading** of the passage and which **do not reward a rereading.**

You can also **learn where to look** in the passage for correct answers. This information will be detailed in section C of this chapter.

Finally, you should remind yourself that this section of the GMAT, like all sections, is arranged so that **easier questions appear at the beginning** of the section and **hard questions appear at the end.** Since each passage has a separate set of questions following it, this section arranges **passages** so that the easiest **set of questions** follows the first passage, the hardest set follows the last section. This means that your original feelings about the familiarity of the topic will have to be modified with the understanding that a familiar topic in the last passage will be the hardest overall passage in the section. You may have less difficulty than most test-takers with this section, but consider the overall difficulty of the question set as you read the passage and questions.

As you choose which passage to read first, use your **familiarity with the topic**, and your **knowledge of the difficulty** of the question set to decide. For example, if you notice that the most familiar topic is the last section, you may want to concentrate on that passage first so that you will have enough time to use your familiarity to answer the hardest question set.

On the other hand, if you find an unfamiliar topic in the last passage, you might consider ignoring the passage completely. If you have a target score that is less than perfect, this strategy may be valuable if it allows you to spend more time on the two question sets that remain. Of course, you wouldn t want to ignore the last passage if the topic is familiar just to spend more time on earlier passages with less familiar topics. I can t offer you specific advice, but these are the factors you should consider.

## B. THE OPTIONS.

The five options, A-E, are distributed fairly randomly throughout all the Reading Comprehension sections on released GMAT forms. There have been **at least 3 of each answer** on each section. There have been **as many as 7 answers** with the same letter on a single section. Thus, you should not be surprised to find a **disparity in the number of letters** you choose. But you should be wary if you choose only 2 of any letter, or 8 of the same letter.

There is a **slight tendency** for **more** answers to be **"B"** --there have been more "B" answers than any other letter on 5 of the 20 GMAT Reading Comprehension sections I have reviewed. The "B" answers have never been the fewest letter in any section. The next most frequent answer is "D", which was the most frequent answer on 4 sections.

There is another **slight tendency** for **fewer** answers that are **"A"**--there have never been more than 6 "A" answers on any section, and "A" has been the least frequent answer on 6 of the 20 GMAT Reading Comprehension sections I have reviewed.

**Beware** if you pick the **same letter 3 times in a row.** This has **never** occured in all 20 GMAT Reading Comprehension sections that I have reviewed. Since this pattern includes carry-overs from two sets of questions, you should look for 3-in-a-row only **after** you have finished the **entire section.**

## C. THE TRICKS.

The **primary Trick** on this section is **time allocation.** With three sets of questions to be completed in 30 minutes, you should budget about **9 minutes** for **each set** of questions, with 3 minutes left to review your work. Most of this 9-minute period should be spent reading the **questions** rather than the passage. There are more lines of text in the questions than there are in the reading passages.

Ideally, you should read the passage fairly quickly, getting a general ideal of the subject matter and of how the passage is organized in paragraphs so that you know where to look for information.

A list of the all Reading Comprehension topics on released GMAT forms is provided below. The number of the test appears on the line above the three passages. Recall that the passages are arranged in **ascending order of difficulty**. Actually, it is the placement of the question set that determines the placement of the passage, but since you can only review the topics, you will get an impression of which types of passages that have more difficult question sets.

Notice also that a large number of passages consider topics that involve minority groups or women. This is a conscious decision by the test-makers to include these passages. If you are a woman, or a member of the minority group mentioned, you may have an approach to these passages that reflects your own experiences and background.

Recall that the GMAT is normed on a test-taking population that is **primarily** made up of **wealthy, white males.** It is **their** approach to the questions that determines the difficulty and the correct answers. (See Chapter 8 on TEST BIAS).

After the description of the topic, two numbers will appear. The first indicates the **number of questions** following the passage. Notice that some passages have only 6 questions, others have 10 questions.

You may want to concentate on those passages with more questions, rather than waste a lot of time reading a passage that has only 6 questions following it when another passage has 10 questions that you didn't have time to consider. Similarly, you may wish to skip an unfamiliar passage if it has only 6 questions following it. You would probably only get a few of the 6 questions right anyway--spend your time answering the 10 questions that follow a more familiar passage.

Remember, all questions count the same. You are rewarded for correct answers, not necessarily for trying all the questions.

The second number is the **number of "ACCORDING TO THE PASSAGE" questions** (See explanation below). This is an indication of how many times you can profitably reread the passage while answering specific questions. Some passages are followed by several of these questions, which means that you should be reading this passage quite a few times. Other passages are not followed by any such questions. These passages should be read only once.

13
--Human population and environmental disruption. 9,1.
--Jazz and black writers. 8,1.
--Suburban sprawl. 8,4.
14,24
--The Depression and the New Deal. 9,3.
--Lorraine Hansberry, **Raisin in the Sun.** 8,2.
--Dissent in science. 8,1.
25,26,27
--Black movement's influence on ethnic movements worldwide. 9,1.
--Galaxy, globular clusters. 8,1.
--Mass culture. 8,2.
23,28
--Women in management or professions. 8,-.
--Music, masterpieces. 9,2
--DNA. 8,1.
29
--Black poets, Robert Hayden, Stephen Vincent Binet. 9,2.
--Future evolution of the sun. 8,-.
--Labor productivity. 8,1.
30
--Foreign medical assistance. 7,1.
--Amiri Baraka's importance to Afro-American literature. 10,2.
--Hypertension. 8,3.
31
--Mosquitos. 8,2.
--Social mobility, status politics. 9,-.
--Architecture & Politics. 8,1.
32
--Genovese, southern slavery and paternalism. 9,1.
--red blood cells and iron. 8,2.
--Actor & character & playright. 8,2.
34
--Vitamin D absorption. 9,2.
--Politics and personal loyalty. 8,1.
--Sylvia Plath, Robert Lowell, and Anne Sexton, poetry criticism.
8,2.
35
--Redlining and black housing. 8,-.
--Geologic deformation. 9,1.
--European and American photography. 8,1.
36
--Quarks and the nucleus. 9,3.
--Evolution and poetry. 8,1.
--Africans, slavery, and cultural isolataion. 8,1.
39
--Mexican-Americans and political activity. 8,2.
--Urban monkeys vs. forest monkeys. 8,-.
--Correspondences in Elizabethan times and the middle ages. 9,1.
40
--Slavery and racism in the U.S. and Brazil. 8,2.
--Desertification and its causes. 8,1.
--Edith Wharton's novels and social conventions. 9,4.

41
--Price-fixing and free markets. 9,2.
--Life cycles of stars. 7,3.
--Jane Austen's novels, reputation. 9,1.
42
--Female Victorian authors. 9,1.
--Medieval France and economic development. 9,2.
--Nuclear fission, surface tension. 7,1.
43
--Jewish ethical code of mentshlekhkayt. 9,1.
--Private writings of New England Women, 1780-1835. 9,2.
--Genetic control of brain functions. 7,-.
44
--Minority owned contractors. 9,1.
--Bird song recognition. 7,3.
--Literary perspectives of Emerson, Thoreau, Hawthorne, Melville, Whitman. 9,2.
45
--North American cultures, vision quests. 8,1.
--Static electricity, hair combing and creme rinse. 9,1.
--Classic rhetoric and Cicero vs. modern rhetoric. 8,1.
46
--Japanese samurai and shoguns of the 18th century. 9,2.
--Art appreciation of Sandro Botticelli (1444-1510). 8,2.
--Immunilogical reactions. 8,1.
47,49
--Classical, modern definitions of art. 9,2.
--Impact of human sex biological differences on society. 10,-.
--methodology of historians and biologists. 6,1.

**********
**1. "ACCORDING TO THE PASSAGE."**
**********

A large number of questions in this section begin with "ACCORDING TO THE PASSAGE," "THE AUTHOR STATES," or other similar introduction. The number of these questions after each passage was listed at the end of each summary above.

These questions are worth noticing, since the answers to these questions are normally found in **explicit terms** in the reading passage. In a sense, these questions are Reading Accuracy questions. You are hurting yourself if you rely on your memory to answer these questions--you **should be rereading** the passage.

I suggest that you find these questions **before** you begin reading the passage. You will know whether there are several of these questions in the set, in which case you will be rereading the passage several more times, or whether there are no such questions, in which case you will only be reading it once.

After you have read the passage once, you may wish to go directly to the "ACCORDING TO THE PASSAGE" questions and reread the passage immediately one or more times **before considering the other questions.** This is fine, as long as you are careful about filling in your answer sheet correctly. **Skipping around** in question order **increases your risk of mismarking** the answer sheet.

As you reread the passage to find the answers to "ACCORDING TO THE PASSAGE" questions, you should have a general idea of **where the answer** appears based on your first reading. I have found a tendency for the correct answer to appear in the **last sentence** of paragraphs. I have not had time to follow this tendency to a statistical result, but you can take this tip with you as you look for answers. This is merely a more specific aspect of the general suggestion that you **learn where to find information** as you read the passage for the first time.

Once you have finished the "ACCORDING TO THE PASSAGE" questions, you should **not reread** the passage to answer questions which begin "IT CAN BE INFERRED" or other such questions--the answers to these questions **do not appear explicitly** in the passage.

You are not managing your time wisely if you reread the passage for questions which will not be explicitly answered by the passage. Instead, use your time to study the options in these questions. Remember, it is normally more important that you **read the questions carefully** rather than the passage.

**********
**2. "PRIMARY PURPOSE OF THE PASSAGE"--Pick "B", "E"; BE .5**
**Frequency Breakdown of Trick:**

| A | B | C | D | E | All | %BE |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 10 | 18 | 8 | 10 | 16 | 62 | **54.8%** |

**********

A large number of questions begin with "THE PRIMARY PURPOSE OF THE PASSAGE," or "THE AUTHOR IS PRIMARILY CONCERNED WITH," or other similar phrases with the word "PRIMARY" or "PRIMARILY" included. Often this is the first question in the set. There were a total of 62 questions in the twenty forms I have reviewed.

This Trick improves your chances over random guessing, but it is far from an ironclad Trick. Thus, you should use it to save time. You can use this Trick, along with Trick #3, to isolate the correct answer in the least amount of time.

**********
**3. The First Word in "PRIMARY" Questions--Keep it Simple.**
**********

The following list includes **all** the words which have appeared **more than once** as the **first word** of a **correct answer** of a "PRIMARY" question. Also listed is the number of times the word has appeared as the first word of an option in a "PRIMARY" question, but of a wrong option.

| WORD | # RIGHT | # WRONG |
|---|---|---|
| Explain | 11 | 19 |
| Describe | 11 | 13 |
| Discuss | 8 | 3 |
| Supporting | 2 | - |
| Define | 2 | 2 |
| Demonstrate | 2 | 3 |
| Proposing | 2 | 4 |
| Argue | 2 | 5 |
| Analyze | 2 | 7 |

This list indicates that the only recurring words that begin correct options are quite **simple.** Thus, "EXPLAIN, DESCRIBE, DISCUSS, SUPPORTING, DEFINE, and DEMONSTRATE" can be grouped as relatively straightforward, **simple** words. They are in everyone's vocabulary. More importantly, they are straightforward beginnings to the statement in the option. Only the terms "ARGUE and ANALYZE" have a more complex function in the statement. To recall this Trick, I suggest that you recall "EXPLAIN, DESCRIBE and DISCUSS."

Of course, as you look at the list, you will see that **few** of these words are **good bets**, in and of themselves. For example, "EXPLAIN" begins a correct answer most often--11 times--but it begins wrong options 19 times. "ANALYZE" is even worse, beginning 2 correct answers, but 7 wrong options.

This list is not useful in the way lists contained in the ANALYSIS OF SITUATIONS Chapter can be useful. Rather, this list is provided to make you aware that the correct option is usually **not preceded** by a **complicated, argumentative, or comparative word**--it is usually begun by a simple word. You cannot bet on any single word with great certainty, but the overall pattern of **simple words** beginning correct answers is valuable.

The following list contains words that were right once, along with the number of wrong appearances. The bottom of the list contains words that were **never** right, but appeared at the beginning of wrong options more than once. You should not memorize this list, but just get a flavor of the two types of words.

| WORD | # RIGHT | # WRONG |
|---|---|---|
| Delineating | 1 | - |
| Explicating | 1 | - |
| Expose | 1 | - |
| Interpreting | 1 | - |
| Emphasize | 1 | 1 |
| Report | 1 | 1 |
| Revealing | 1 | 1 |
| Urge | 1 | 1 |
| Clarify | 1 | 2 |
| Introduce | 1 | 2 |
| Review | 1 | 2 |
| Summarize | 1 | 2 |
| Criticizing | 1 | 4 |
| Advocate | 1 | 5 |
| Illustrate | 1 | 5 |
| Outlining | 1 | 5 |
| Refute | 1 | 5 |
| Suggesting | 1 | 5 |
| Provide | - | 10 |
| Compare | - | 8 |
| Evaluating | - | 7 |
| Present | - | 6 |
| Reconcile | - | 6 |
| Contrasting | - | 5 |
| Defend | - | 5 |
| Show | - | 5 |
| Point Out | - | 4 |
| Question | - | 4 |
| Establish | - | 3 |
| Examine | - | 3 |
| Exploring | - | 3 |
| Raise | - | 3 |
| Detailing | - | 2 |
| Encouraging | - | 2 |
| Indicate | - | 2 |
| Predict | - | 2 |
| Prove | - | 2 |
| Recommend | - | 2 |
| Resolve | - | 2 |
| Synthesize | - | 2 |
| Trace | - | 2 |

The following dozen words have appeared only once in a **wrong** option: "CALCULATING, COUNTERING, DEPLORING, DISCREDIT, EQUATING, INDICT, MINIMIZE, MODIFY, NULLIFY, SIMPLIFYING, REJECT, and UNDERMINE." You should recognize that these words are **too active** for this type of question. They involve too much opinionating--as opposed to "EXPLAIN, DESCRIBE and DISCUSS."

**********

**4. TRUE-FALSE Questions--Roman Numeral I is TRUE: I - T .8**

**Frequency Breakdown of Trick:**

| | T | F | All | %T |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| I | 31 | 5 | 6 | **86.1%** |

**********

You may think that all the GMAT questions are multiple-choice, with five options to choose from. However, there were 39 TRUE-FALSE question groups that appeared on the twenty Reading Comprehension sections I have reviewed. These questions are the ones which include 3 or 4 **statemnents after Roman Numerals.** The A-E options are choices among the Roman Numerals. You will only be scored for your selection of A-E, but you are **really** being tested in a TRUE-FALSE format.

Before you can choose A-E, you must first decide whether **each statement** is TRUE or FALSE. Do this by **marking a T or F** in front of each option.

You can save yourself some time--with little risk of error--if you **assume Roman Numeral I to be TRUE.** For simplicity in the analysis of TRUE-FALSE questions, I have limited myself to the 36 questions with only 3 Roman Numerals. Of the 36 Roman Numeral I statements, 31 were TRUE. (2 of the 3 four-Roman-Numeral questions had Roman Numeral I scored as TRUE.) If you are not pressed for time, you can look at Roman Numeral I, but don't worry if it looks TRUE-it probably is!

This Trick is the most extreme example of a **general trend** on Reading Comprehension TRUE-FALSE questions to have TRUE Roman Numeral statements. There is a tendency for the **later** Roman Numeral statements to be TRUE **less often**, but even III has been TRUE 50% of the time. The Frequency Breakdown for all three Roman Numerals is given below.

**Frequency Breakdown of TRUE-FALSE questions:**

| | T | F | All | %T |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| I | 31 | 5 | 36 | **86.1%** |
| II | 21 | 15 | 36 | **58.3%** |
| III | 18 | 18 | 36 | **50%** |

You can use this information to **begin with Roman Numeral III** and work backwards, looking for FALSE statements. If you decide whether III and II are TRUE or FALSE, you can check A-E to see if your hunch that I is TRUE is consistent with the choices given to you. In general, you should **avoid getting drawn into the order of options presented by the test-makers.** The order may have been selected to waste your time.

As you take this type of question, you should also **take stock of your own personality.** Research has confirmed that diferent people have different "Respsonse Styles." Some people tend to answer TRUE when they are uncertain, others tend to answer FALSE. There is no general way to advise you.

You must determine for yourself whether you are likely to answer TRUE or FALSE when you are uncertain. You can do this by examining your responses on the practice GMAT questions you take, or any other true-false questions you may have taken in school. You can simply ask your friends if you are gullible or skeptical. Somehow you should know what your tendency is and try to avoid the tendency when you take the GMAT.

**********

**5. TRUE-FALSE Questions with "ACCORDING TO THE PASSAGE"--**
**Eliminate "A", "B": AB .1**
**Frequency Breakdown of Trick:**

| A | B | C | D | E | All | %AB |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 1 | 6 | 3 | 3 | 14 | **14.3%** |

**********

Fourteen TRUE-FALSE questions asked "ACCORDING TO THE PASSAGE" and were **very time consuming** since you should be rereading the passage. For TRUE-FALSE questions, this means rereading the passage three times--once for each Roman Numeral. This Trick does not avoid this rereading, but it does indicate that most of the Roman Numerals will be TRUE--in keeping with the general tendency of TRUE-FALSE questions in the Reading Comprehension section.

Since there is a **general tendency** for **TRUE Roman Numerals** and "A" and "B" usually contain only one Roman Numeral, they are unlikely to be the correct answer. The most likey answer is "C", but you should not pick this answer blindly.

**********

**6. Roman Numeral in 4 Options is TRUE: T .9**
**Frequency Breakdown of Trick:**

| T | F | All | %T |
|---|---|---|---|
| 14 | 1 | 15 | **93.3** |

**********

You can **count the Roman Numerals in the options.** In most cases, when there are 3 Roman Numerals, there will be 3 options which include each Roman Numeral. However, there will be times when a Roman Numeral appears in 4 of the 5 options.

In this case, you have identified a **crucial statement** to be classified **immediately**--if it turns out to be FALSE, you can eliminate 4 of the options and only the correct one remains. On the other hand, you can save time by **immediately assuming a Roman Numeral in 4 options is TRUE.**

**********
**7. Roman Numeral in 2 Options is FALSE: F .6**
**Frequency Breakdown of Tricks:**

| T | F | All | %F |
|---|---|---|---|
| 10 | 17 | 27 | 63% |

**********

The flip-side of the last Trick looks at the Roman Numerals that appear only **twice** among the 5 options. These Roman Numerals have a relatively strong tendency to be **FALSE.**

**Tricks # 6 and 7 are stronger** for the **last** Roman Numerals. The only FALSE Roman Numeral that appeared in 4 options was I. When I appeared in only 2 options, it was TRUE 3 times and FALSE 3 times.

Since it is probable that the Roman Numeral statements are arranged in the test-maker's idea of increasing difficulty, this means that the Trick is most valuable for the hardest of the Roman Numerals. At least it saves you the time you would be wasting looking at the last Roman Numeral statement.

**********
**8. "ATTITUDE OF THE AUTHOR,"--Eliminate "B", "D": BD. #**
**"TONE OF THE PASSAGE," --PICK "B", "D": BD .7**
**Frequency Breakdown of Tricks:**

| | A | B | C | D | E | All | %BD |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| "ATTITUDE..." | 4 | - | 3 | - | 1 | 8 | 0% |
| "TONE..." | 1 | 4 | 1 | 3 | 1 | 10 | 70% |

**********

These 18 questions should be considered together for two reasons: 1) their answer pattern; 2) their potential for cultural bias.

The answer pattern is quite interesting. It looks as though the test-makers have tried to balance out the frequency of correct answers among A-E, but done so by combining the two types of questions into a single frequency breakdown. If they are separated out according to the words "ATTITUDE" or "TONE", however, the odds on both types of questions go up--**Eliminate BD** in "ATTITUDE" questions and **Pick BD** in "TONE" passages.

**What is interesting, if my theory is correct, is the fact** that the two types of questions were grouped in the minds of the test-makers. If they do, it may be for the same reason that I group the two types of questions--**their ability to probe your own attitudes and emotions.**

It is the second reason for grouping these questions that is **most important--their potential for cultural bias.** These questions contain emotional words such as "ADMIRING, SKEPTICAL, ADMONITORY, ARGUMENTATIVE, NEEDLESSLY DIVISIVE, and OBJECTIVE" in correct answers. The subject matter is often topics involving **minority groups, women, or social class.**

I have treated these question types more extensively in Chapter 8 on TEST BIAS. Here I will only remind you that the questions ask about the **author of the Passage**, not about yourself. Yet these questions are likely to involve bias because they tend to evoke your **own** perceptions of the author's attitude or the passage's tone. If you consider yourself susceptible to this type of error, these are the questions which I consider very likely to trip you up for injecting your own perceptions into your choice of an answer.

**********

**9. "IF TRUE."**

**********

This type of question appears very rarely in Reading Comprehension sections. Nevertheless, it is worth mentioning because it also appears after passages involving **minority groups, women, or social class.**

You must go through **two separate stages** to answer this question. **First,** you decide which statements "WEAKEN" or "STRENGTHEN" the statement mentioned in the question. **Not all options will you do so.**

**Then,** and only then, compare the possible answers to see which one is "MOST" in the direction required by the question --either "WEAKENING" or "STRENGTHENING".

Because these questions appear in sensitive questions, you may refuse to believe that the correct answer is TRUE. But you are **required to assume** that all options are TRUE.

You are also likely to pick an answer which strengthens the statement when you are looking for one which "WEAKENS" it--just because the statement seems appropriate to the topic.

**********

**10. Big Words in the Option.**

**********

**In general,** you should **not pick** an answer that contains a word you don't understand.

This is because the test was pre-tested on a group of test-takers with a college background that is pretty similar to yours. There wouldn't be very good pre-test statistics from a question which contained an unfamiliar word in the correct option. Too many poeple would just guess at such a question and the correlation with the rest of the test would be too low (See Chapter 2 on TEST DEVELOPMENT).

However, **do not automatically eliminate** an answer simply because it contains a "Big Word" in the option. If you understand the meaning of the word and it seems to be in a correct option, pick it!

The point to be remembered here is don t pick a word as correct just because you don t know the meaning of the word and assume that the rest of the test-takers know the meaning and therefore it must be the correct answer. In this case, you are more likely to be picking a wrong answer based on low self-esteem than you are to be picking a correct answer.

The **exception** to this advice involves the **last passage.** Here, you should **pick "Big Words,"** even if you aren t sure of the meaning, unless you have a good reason to pick another anwser. The set of questions is **last** because **few** people got them right on the pre-test. They may have missed a question because there was a "Big Word" they didn't recognize. You can avoid the fate of most of the people on the pre-test by picking the answer they avoided--it is probably the correct answer!

## D. EXAMPLES OF TRICKS FROM PUBLISHED GMAT MATERIALS.

Abbreviations Used:

**SQ Sample Question** contained in the **Bulletin of Information** for the GMAT.

All other questions are from the sample sections in **The Official Guide to GMAT.**

***** These questions appear to fit the Tricks, but have answers that do not fit the Tricks. You should study tehse questions with particular care to be sure that you will be able to identify the questions which do not fit the Tricks.

**1. "ACCORDING TO THE PASSAGE."**
I. 10, 11, 22
II. 2, 9, 11, 20, 22, 23
III. 6, 13, 19, 25
A 2, 6, 10, 15, 18, 19, 21, 22
B 6, 7, 11, 12, 1o, 24
C 2, 10, 11

**2. "PRIMARY PURPOSE OF THE PASSAGE"--Pick "B", "E": BE .5**
SQ 1
I. 4*, 6*, 9*, 18*, 21, 25
II. 8*, 16*, 18*, 21
III. 8*, 17, 18*
A 1*, 9, 17*
B 1, 9, 10*
C 1, 16, 20*, 25

3. The First Word in "PRIMARY" Questions--Keep ot Simple.
I. 4, 6, 9*, 18*, 21, 25
II. 8, 16, 21*
III. 8, 17, 18
A 1, 9, 17
B 1*, 9*, 10
C 1, 20, 25*

4. TRUE-FALSE Questions--Roman Numeral I is TRUE: I - T .8
SQ3
I 19, 20
II. 6, 20
III. 4
A 10, 24
B 2, 14
C 12, 22*

5. TRUE-FALSE Questions with "ACCORDING TO THE PASSAGE"--
Eliminate "A", "B": AB .1
II.20
A 10
C 22*

6. Roman Numeral in 4 Options is TRUE: T .9
SQ 3
III. 4
A 24
C 12

7. Roman Numerals in 2 Options is FALSE: F .6
SQ 3*
II. 6*, 20
III. 4*
A 10*
C 22

8. "ATTITUDE OF THE AUTHOR"--Eliminate "B", "D": BD .8
"TONE OF THE PASSAGE" --Pick "B", "D"; BD .7
I. 8, 16*
II. 17, 25
III. 21*
A 16
B 3

9. "IF TRUE"
SQ 5
II. 7, 19

10. "Big Words" in Options.
No Examples in Published GMAT Materials.

## E. COMMENTARY ON THE TRICKS.

**III. 13.** This is a good example of an "ACCORDING TO THE PASSAGE" question that is combined with an "ALL...EXCEPT" format. Four of the options will be mentioned in the passage. You are to find the option **not** listed. Once you have found one option that is not listed, pick it! Don't waste time looking down the other options to see if they were mentioned as well. In this case, since the answer is "A", you should not have read options B-E.

**I. 4, 6, 9, 18, 21, 25,** Here is an entire test with 6 "PRIMARY" questions, yet the Trick--Pick "B", "E" is only correct on 2 questions. This is below its general accuracy rate. This merely points out that the Tricks **cannot** be used as gambling odds. the Tricks should guide you in looking at answers, but not decide your choice of answer without reading.

**I. 9.** This question is unusual, with the words "EXPOSE THE FALLACY" at the beginning of the correct option. If you feel uncomfortable picking the statements which begin "EXPLAIN" and "DESCRIBE", you should review the other options rather than simply follow the Trick blindly.

**II. 8.** This question has option "E" with "DESCRIBING" at the beginning. Nevertheless, you should recognize that Tricks #2 & #3 are not applicable. This is because the phrase "CULTURAL ROOTS" is too stereotypical of a black test-takers' jargon. It is not likely to be the correct answer, even though the passage is about a black writer. It is the choice of **wealthy, white males** that determines the correct answers.

**I. 20.** Notice that I is listed in 4 options. This means that two Tricks point to TRUE.

**II. 7.** This "IF TRUE" question involves the controversy over appropriate foreign medical assistance. You should recognize that the correct answer states an argument which those pushing "EXPENSIVE ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS" would make. This is compatible with the perspective of wealthy, white males--or your average doctor!

## CHAPTER 7. SENTENCE CORRECTION.

### A. THE STRUCTURE.

This section consists of 25 sentences with some or all of the words underlined. Option "A" **always repeats the underlined portion identically.** Options B-E offer possible substitutions for the original underlined portions.

You may think that this section includes only 25 sentences, but the length of the underlined portions and alternatives in B-E means that there is a lot to read--very carefully. This chapter teaches you **how to read the sentences and alternatives**, and **what errors are likely to appear.**

You **cannot** simply read the underlined portions, or simply compare the alternatives with each other. Quite often, the correction in the underlined portion is necessary in order to fit into the non-underlined portion of the sentence. Thus, you need to read the **entire sentence** to identify errors. Remember, you **cannot change the non-underlined portions of the sentence.** Even if you think it would be better to completely rewrite the sentence, you are stuck with the sentence and alternatives provided in the test.

As you select among the options, you are also required to compare the **style** of the alternatives. Normally you will be looking for a style that fits an academic/business writing style. Jargon is to be avoided. However, you may be surprised at the poor style of some of the sentences and alternatives. So begin your search for **clear errors** and only search for style once you are unable to select an answer based solely on clear error.

You will have five options to choose among. This means that the **options will contain additional choices** beyond those required by the original sentence. Sometimes you will have to spend more time selecting among the options than you will identifying the original error in the sentence. Thus, part of the strategy for this section is **learning how to compare the options.**

### B. THE OPTIONS.

The options, A-E, are **fairly evenly distributed in the section.** There have been two of the last ten forms with 5 of each letter. **There have never been more than 6 of any letter, nor less than 4.** Usually, there will be at least 4 of each letter. There has only been one form with 3 "A" answers; the only other 3-letter section had 3 "E" answers. But 1 answer in both of these sections was not scored (I would guess the answers had been "A" & "E".)

Three of the last ten forms have had one question in this section which was not scored--the question was **defective.** Thus, don't waste too much time puzzling over a question with no answer that you feel comfortable selecting--you may have made a mistake, but the test-makers may have made a mistake instead.

There have been 3 of the same letter in a row **only once.** This means you should check your answers if you find 3-in-a-row of any letter.

**********

**Question # 1--Pick "C": C .6**
**Question #25--Pick "D": D .5**
**Frequency Distribution of Trick:**

| | A | B | C | D | E | All |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| # 1 | - | 2 | 6 | - | 2 | 10 |
| #25 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 5 | 1 | 10 |

**********

The **first and last questions** have interesting answer patterns--worth using to save some time. Remember, the easiest question is the first one on the section; the hardest is the last. The easiest question was answered correctly by the most people on the pre-test; the hardest was answered correctly by the fewest number of people. This means that the patterns for the first and last questions tell you something about the guessing habits of your fellow-test-takers. When they guess correctly, the question turns out to be easy; when they guess wrong, the question is hard.

This pattern is interesting to me. It suggests that **people tend to pick "C" and to avoid "D".** When "C" is a correct answer, people tend to pick it and the question turns out to be easy. When "D" is the answer, people don't pick it, and the question turns out to be difficult. At least that's what the first and last questions suggest.

I have divided the section into three parts, 1-8, 9-17, and 18-25. to see if there was a general pattern of this sort. It turned out that there was a **slight tendency** in this direction, but not worth depending on. The most interesting tendency is for **slightly more** "D" answers in the last section. Just for your information, here is the breakdown of the section by Thirds.

**Frequency Breakdown of Thirds:**

| | A | B | C | D | E | All |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| FIRST THIRD | 14 | 14 | 16 | 18 | 17 | 79 |
| SECOND THIRD | 18 | 19 | 20 | 15 | 14 | 87 |
| THIRD THIRD | 14 | 19 | 15 | 20 | 16 | 78 |

(NOTE: the Second Third has 1 more question on each of the 10 forms.)

Don't guess on the first question--it should really be easy! You may feel time pressure to guess on the last question, if so, pick "D".

Notice that there has not been an "H" answer for the first question. I would guess that this is the result of the test-makers decision to have an error in the first question--it gives you a boost when you find it and encourages you to give your best effort on the rest of the test. If the pre-test showed an "H" answer to be the easiest, I would guess that the test-makers would throw it out rather than put it first on the test.

## C. THE TRICKS.

The two major Tricks of this section are:

1) **Know what errors to look for,**
2) **Learn how to compare options.**

This chapter will also provide Frequency Breakdowns for certain types of questions, but these are secondary to a general strategy for approaching this section.

**********

### 1. Read From Comma to Comma.

**********

There are lots of words in this section. Yet you will find **many errors right before and after commas.** This means that the verbiage which is not near commas is usually just that! You can quickly find errors by skipping the middle verbiage and just reading the words around the commas.

There are several types of errors that tend to appear around commas. These will be discussed in greater detail. For now, just recognize that **Parallelism, Number Agreement, and Dangling Modifier** errors are usually surrounded by commas. Since these are frequent errors, you will be wisely using your time by reading from comma to comma.

**********

### 2. Compare Options From the Front and the Back.

**********

This Trick is an outgrowth of Trick #1--errors around commas--since you will often find the material between commas underlined. However, it is of more general value.

**The crucial comparisons among options usually appear at the beginning and the end of the alternatives.** This means you should practice scanning the **first two words** of the five options. Normally you will have 2 choices. You **cannot simply pick the choice appearing in the most options.** However, if one choice appears in 4 options, it is probably correct--but not always (13/14).

After you have identified the similar choices, **make a notation of the similar choices.** If you can, **decide which choice is CLEARLY CORRECT.** If you can make such a choice, then you have narrowed your options to 2 or 3 choices.

Then, **scan the back of the remaining options.** You will again find that some choices are the same in 2 or more options. If a choice appears in 4 options, it is probably correct. Limit your choices to the ones left after you scanned the front of the alternatives. You should be able to select the correct answer after you have scanned both the front and back of the alternatives.

The words in the middle of the alternatives will rarely figure in the selection of the correct answer. If you just read each options as it apears on the page, you will be falling into all the traps the test-makers have laid for you. You will waste time, get confused, and eventually find yourself selecting among options as I suggested above. It is better to start by scanning the edges of the options FIRST.

**********

**3. Six Words or Less Underlined--Pick "A": A .2**

**Frequency Breakdown of Trick:**

| | A | B | C | D | E | All | %A |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| ALL | 13 | 10 | 9 | 7 | 7 | 46 | **28.3%** |
| FIRST THIRD | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 15 | **33.3%** |
| SECOND THIRD | 6 | 2 | 3 | 2 | 3 | 16 | **37.5%** |
| THIRD THIRD | 2 | 4 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 15 | **13.3%** |

**********

You will not be able to scan the edges of very short alternatives. (I have defined this as six words or less underlined.) Usually you will have five different alternatives with little overlap among them.

There is a **slight tendency** for these questions to have **NO ERROR.** This means that "A" is correct. This overall pattern is **stronger in the early part of the section.** I find the answer pattern in the First-Third particularly interesting as an example of people's guessing patterns--54321. The "A" answer is even more frequent in the Second-Third of the section. It is reversed in the Third-Third. This means that people tend to guess "A": when that is the answer, it is a relatively easy question, when "A"is wrong, it is relatively hard.

One reason for people to guess "A" on these short underlined portions may be a failure to **read the entire sentence.** Often the short underlined part is not compatible with the non-underlined part.. This may involve Parallelism or Number Agreement. So don't be like most of the people on the pre-test: **read the entire sentence first.**

**********
**4. All Words Underlined--Pick "E", "D": ED .6**
**Frequency Breakdown of Trick:**

| A | B | C | D | E | All | %ED |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 4 | 1 | 4 | 6 | 16 | 62.5% |

**********

The opposite extreme involves questions with every word underlined. These tend to be long sentences, with equally long alternatives, and lots of reading for you. They are perfect time-wasters.

You can save time by **reading the alternatives from the bottom up.** This is a valuable strategy, since more than half of the correct answers are "E" or "D". Since "E" is slightly more frequent, I have put it first in the Trick.

This Trick is a direct response to what seems to be the test-maker's strategy of putting the answer late to get you to waste time. You can both save time and find the correct answer by reversing the order of your reading.

Notice that there was only 1 "A" answer with all the words underlined--and it was in the Third-Third of the test. Similarly, there was only 1 "C" answer, and it was in the First-Third of the test, probably because people tend to guess "C" when faced with lots of reading and little time.

**********
**5. All Words Underlined & Dangling Modifier--Pick "E": E .5**
**Frequency Breakdown of Trick:**

| A | B | C | D | E | All | %E |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| - | 2 | - | 2 | 4 | 8 | 50% |

**********

Half of these questions had **Dangling Modifiers** in them. You should be able to spot these by **Reading Between the Commas.** The long sentences are good disguises for this type of question. Once you find a Dangling Modifier, "E" is a 50% chance of the correct answer.

**********
**6. Dangling Modifier--Pick "E": E .3**
**Frequency Breakdown of Trick:**

| A | B | C | D | E | All | %E |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| - | 6 | 11 | 7 | 13 | 37 | 35.1% |

**NOTE: Since the following Tricks involve types of ERRORS, "A" will never be the correct answer.**
**********

The Dangling Modifier is the favorite error on this section. It has appeared between 2 and 6 times on each section. So you should look for this on any question which does not have another obvious error.

These errors will usually be found **around commas.** They are often funny--the sort of thing you read in the **Reader's Digest** or **New Yorker** humor tidbits. They should be obvious, once you realize that you should be looking for them. Don't stop looking for Dangling Modifiers just because you have found a few already--they are fairly evenly distributed among the Thirds of the test.

**********
**7. Number Agreement--Eliminate "B": B .08**
**Frequency Breakdown of Trick:**

| A | B | C | D | E | All | %B |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| - | 3 | 11 | 10 | 12 | 36 | **8.3%** |

**********

The other frequent error on this section involves Number Agreement. This occurs when the subject of a sentence is singular and the verb is plural. You know the correct answer if you speak English, but it can be confusing with lots of irrelevant verbiage thrown in to confuse you.

Look for this error **around comas.** In addition, you will find this error when certain phrases occur.

For example, "NUMBERS OF ERRORS ARE" is wrong! Even though "ERRORS" is plural, it is "NUMBER" which must agree with the verb. You can avoid falling into this trap by eliminating "OF ERRORS" and reading the sentence. The error will be obvious.

A simple way of noticing this error would be to look for the word "OF". When it occurs, drop the words following "OF" that precede the verb. Often you will find an error in Number Agreement.

This type of error occurs more than once on a section, so keep looking for it!

**********
**8. Parallel Subjects, Objects, or Verbs--Pick "C": C .4**
**Frequency Breakdown of Trick:**

| A | B | C | D | E | All | %C |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| - | 7 | 13 | 8 | 3 | 31 | **41.9%** |

**********

These errors occur in different sentences, but are worth considering together. They typically occur in **long sentences.** This is because the excess verbiage in the sentences confuses you. Therefore, you should make sure that you **read all the verbs together,** without the words in between. You will quickly see that one does not fit. If there are three or more, the odd one will be wrong. If there are only two, you will have to decide which one fits the sentence.

This same process should be followed for subjects and objects of verbs. Read all the subjects together; all the objects together. Remember, **you can only change the underlined portion of the sentence.** Therefore, you will have to select a change that is compatible with the non-underlined portion of the sentence.

**********

**9. "AS", "THAN"--Pick "C", "E": CE .6**

**Frequency Breakdown of Trick:**

| A | B | C | D | E | All | %CE |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 5 | 3 | 16 | 6 | 12 | 44 | **66.7%** |

**********

These are two words that often appear in sentences with errors. As you can see, 5 times these words appeared in a sentence with no error, and thus "A" was the answer. However, in general these are good flag words for errors. Look for them!

At this point I should say a word about my methodology. I have read each sentence several times, and noted each sentence with these words appearing in them. However, I have not used a computer to verify these notations. Thus, it is possible that I have missed some appearances of key words. This may increase the number of "A" answers, or may involve questions with other errors appearing in them that eluded my search. However, this is still **a good strategy for taking this section.** You may find "AS" or "THAN" in sentences that don't involve them in errors, but you are unlikely to decide that these involve errors when they don't.

I have mentioned these two words together because they are normally confused with each other on the test. They are both **words of comparison.** "AS" suggests an equality; "THAN" suggests an inequality.

Sometimes commas will separate verbiage from the words "GREATER,...,AS", for example.

It is also likely that **only part of the relevant phrase will be underlined.** You may encounter "AS MUCH...THAN" with only the first or last words underlined. You will have to read the whole sentence to find the error. Remember, **you can only change the underlined portion.**

When you substitute "AS" for "THAN", you will be changing the meaning of the original comparison. Even though there is a rule against changing the meaning of the original sentence, don't hesitate to make the change if it is called for by the grammar of the sentence--in the case of "AS" or "THAN".

**********
**10. "BEING"--Find the Error.**
**Frequency Breakdown of Trick:**

| A | B | C | D | E | All | %A |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 4 | 2 | 4 | 5 | 4 | 19 | 21.1% |

**********

This is another word that frequently appears as an error in sentences--"IT BEING THE CASE", for example. When you see this word, it is probably an error. Actually, "A" apears as often as a random selection of answers would predict, but it is significant since finding this **one word** gives you an 80% chance of finding an error--and avoiding looking for other errors.

It is surprising to me, but "BEING" usually appears in the Third-Third of the test (11/19), indicating that it is a fairly hard question. This may be the result of people failing to notice the error, or it may be because people notice the error but fail to pick the correct answer. You will notice that there is no pattern to the correct answer on these questions.

**********
**11. "NOT ONLY" "BUT ALSO"--Eliminate "E": E .0**
**Frequency Breakdown of Trick:**

| A | B | C | D | E | All | %E |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| - | 4 | 2 | 5 | - | 11 | 0% |

**********

These two phrases go with each other. But they don't on sentences in this section. You must find the correct statement among the options--and you can eliminate "E". You should be able to find the correct answer among the three remaining options.

A more general statement of this Trick involves the two words "NOT" and "BUT". Thus, you might find "BUT RATHER" as the correct statement. In general, when you find one of these words--look for the other!

**********
**12. "LIKE", "UNLIKE"--Eliminate "D": D .0**
**Frequency Breakdown of Trick:**

| A | B | C | D | E | All | %D |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 3 | 7 | 6 | - | 4 | 20 | 0% |

**********

These words do not appear in the same sentences, Both, however, involve **comparisons**. Apparently they also are a part of slang so that they confuse people when misused.

Do not automatically assume they are used incorrectly. Notice that there were 3 times when "A" was the correct answer (these appeared in the early portions of the test).

These words may be incorrect substitutes for "SUCH AS" or "FOR EXAMPLE"--words that exemplify without comparing.

**********
**13. Redundancy.**
**********

Redundancy means saying the same thing twice.

It is important that you recognize what the test-makers consider redundancy on this section. Combinations that have occured include:

"MAY...POSSIBLY"
"AWAY...FROM"
"FLOW...OUT"
"DOWN TO...NADIR"
"TEN YEARS...DECADE"

These questions don't appear very often, but check for them before choosing "A".

**********
**14. "NUMBER" "FEWER"**
**"AMOUNT" "LESS"--Eliminate "A": A .0**
**Frequency Breakdown of Trick:**

| A | B | C | D | E | All | %A |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| - | 3 | 5 | 3 | 4 | 15 | 0% |

**********

When you see "NUMBER" or "AMOUNT" look for an error. The words on each line go with each other. Don't use "AMOUNT" and "FEWER" together, for example. Such a question appears about twice on each section and there has yet to be one without an error.

These words may also appear in Number Agreement errors. For example, you may see "THE NUMBER OF COUNTRIES ARE." You should recall that the "OF..." phrase should be deleted to notice the error. Once you do, the error is obvious. (See Trick #8).

**********
**15. Blacks, Hispanics, Asians, or Native Americans mentioned in sentence: Find an Error.**
**********

You will encounter sentences that mention minority group members by name or by group. Normally there will also be an error in this sentence. For example, only one sentence that mentioned a black person by name had "A" as the answer.

There is a danger that readers who are members of the particular minority group will be distracted by the mention of a famous person with a similar racial or ethnic background. You may find yourself looking at the substance of the sentence more carefully than you are the grammar. If you do, beware, there is probably an error in the sentence--find it!

## D. EXAMPLES OF TRICKS FROM PUBLISHED GMAT MATERIALS.

Abbreviations Used:

**SQ Sample Question** included in the **Information Bulletin** for the GMAT.

All other questions are from the sample sections in **The Official Guide to GMAT.**

***** This question has an answer which does not agree with the Trick. You should study these questions with particular care to assure yourself that you will be able to identify those questions which do not fit the Tricks. Remember, all of these Tricks could have exceptions.

**1. Read from Comma to Comma.**
I 2
II 25
A 22, 24
B 4
C 14, 16, 18

**2. Compare Options From the Front and the Back.**
I 7, 17, 24
II 2, 7, 14, 17, 18
A 2, 8, 14
B 7, 12, 16
C 13, 18

**3. Six Words or Less Underlined--Pick "A": A .2**
I 1*, 2*, 3*, 9*, 20*, 22*, 23*
II 1*, 6*
A 4*, 10*, 22*
B 4*, 10*, 17*, 19*, 21, 23, 25*
C 4*, 8, 9, 14*, 17, 24

**4. All Words Underlined--Pick "E" or "D": ED .6**
I 19
II 16, 21
A 13, 17

**5. All Words Underlined & Dangling Modifier--Pick "E": E .5**
II 16
A 13

**6. Dangling Modifier--Pick "E": E .3**
I 4, 21*, 25*
II 16, 20
A 5, 8*, 13, 15*
B 3*, 16*, 19*, 20*
C 6*, 11*, 18*

7. Number Agreement--Eliminate "B": B .08
I 12, 17
II 1*
A 11
B 1, 11, 22*
C 1, 3*

8. Parallel Subjects, Objects, or Verbs--Pick "C": C .4
SQ 32
I 2, 22
II 3, 19*
A 20*,
24
B 2*, 11
C 1, 12*, 20

9. "AS", "THAN"--Pick "C", "E": CE .6
I 10
II 17*, 25
A 2*, 9*, 12*, 25
B 5, 13*, 23*, 25
C 4, 14

10. "BEING"--Find the Error.
I 10
II 10, 19, 25
A 23
C 7*

11. "NOT ONLY", "BUT ALSO"--Eliminate "E": E .0
I 1
B 24
C 5

12. "LIKE", "UNLIKE"--Eliminate "D": D .0
SQ 30
I 9
II 1, 6
A 22
B 3

13. Redundancy
A 17
C 22, 24

14. "NUMBER" "FEWER"
"AMOUNT" "LESS"--Eliminate "A": A .0
B 7
C 1, 10, 16, 22

**15. Blacks, Hispanics, Asians, or Native Americans mentioned in sentence: Find an Error.**
SQ 31
I 2, 16
II 9, 15
A 3, 9
B 8, 17

## E. COMMENTARY ON THE TRICKS.

II 18. This question is a good example of the value of comparing options from **the Front and the Back**. In this question, you can eliminate 3 options at the Front and 3 options at the Back. Since they are different options, you can identify the correct answer with this Trick.

I 12. This is an actual **Dangling Modifier**. The explanations make a distinction between this and a **misplaced modifier**, but this chapter considers them together.

I 17. This sentence involves the opposite time frame--the future. Here, "WILL...UNTIL" go together. Once you decide this is correct, you can eliminate "D" and "E" from consideration.

I 24. The "BETWEEN...AND" combination is the key to this question, but the sentence is still confusing unless you know the chemical reaction being described. You can avoid this confusion by recognizing that the **crucial comparisons** come at the **edges** of the underlined portions. Thus, you can ignore the "AND" at the beginning of the third line of the sentence--it isn't underlined.

I 21. This is a perfect example of the humorous **Dangling Modifier**. You should be looking for such an error several times in the section. Since there is no comma in this sentence, the error may be difficult to spot. Perhaps this is why such a bad joke is #21 in the section.

I 22. This is a good sentence to examine for the confusion between "MAKING" and "TO MAKE". The test-makers frequently confuse the two verb forms. Neither one is always right or wrong; often an error in Parallelism is involved.

SI 9. This sentence does not have one correct way of stating the idea. You are forced to choose among the five options given--other options may also have been acceptable, but they didn't appear on the test. The difference between "C" and "E" is just a matter of proof-reading.

## CHAPTER 8. TEST BIAS

### A. WHAT IS TEST BIAS?

I consider test bias to be **answering a test question in a certain way because of a person's background or identity.** Test bias may involve choosing a correct answer, disregarding a correct answer, choosing a wrong answer, or disregarding a wrong answer because of your background or identity.

Overall, it is clear that the GMAT has a lower score distribution for **women, members of minority groups, and test-takers from low-income backgrounds.** This does **not** mean that every question is biased against individuals with these characteristics, but it does mean that the **overall score of wealthy, white males will be the highest.**

I have published research concerning each type of test bias. For the interested reader, you may wish to consult:

"The Definition of Legal Competence: Will the Circle Be Unbroken?" 18 Santa Clara Law Review 641 (1978).

"Culturally Biased Testing and Predictive Invalidity: Putting them on the Record," 14 Harvard Civil Rights - Civil Liberties Law Review 89 (1979).

"The Law School Admission Test and the Continuing Minority Status of Women in Law Schools," 2 Harvard Women's Law Journal 103 (1979).

"Pride, Prejudice and Prediction: From **Brown** to **Bakke** and Beyond," 22 Howard Law Journal 375 (1979).

**Towards a Diversified Legal Profession: An Inquiry into the Law School Admission Test, Grade Inflation, and Current Admissions Policies** (1981).

**The Effect of Coaching, Defective Questions, and Cultural Bias on the Validity of the Law School Admission Test** (1984).

You should be able to find these in a local law library. If you cannot, you can order copies from **TESTING FOR THE PUBLIC**, 1308 Peralta, Berkeley, CA 94702.

My earlier writing concentrated on proving that test bias was a real problem. Various questions from sample and actual tests were reproduced to make the point--especially in the two books I have published on test bias.

This chapter has a different purpose. It will try to explain **how to avoid test bias** and **how to use the bias in the test to select correct answers.** Like the earlier chapters, no actual questions will be reproduced, but examples from the published GMAT materials will be noted and discussed.

If you are a member of one or more of the affected groups, you may raise your score above the level it would have been before reading this chapter. However, any test-taker should benefit from reading this chapter. You may be a member of another minority group--such as gay, or handicapped, or a member of an activist political minority.

This is because the GMAT is biased against **minorities** pure and simple. Since women are a minority of test-takers on the GMAT, the test is biased against them. This is a natural result of the test development process.

## B. WHY THE GMAT IS BIASED.

The bias in the GMAT is a **natural and inevitable result** of the test development process. (See Chapter 2 on TEST DEVELOPMENT.) This means that the test-makers are not evil people plotting for the ultimate success of wealthy, white males. Even the most sincere effort by test-makers to develop a bias-free test would fail because of the test development process.

Once you understand how the test development process creates bias, you can use this knowledge to **beat the GMAT with its own bias.**

Recall that the test development process focused on two goals:
1) **the DIFFICULTY of the question,**
2) **the CONSISTENCY of results among pre-test questions.**
It is the pursuit of these two goals that inevitably results in test bias.

Consider what could happen if only the first goal of DIFFICULTY was pursued. It would be fairly easy to write questions that only a few test-takers got right. The question could be written in Spanish, for example. We might ask questions that involve a knowledge of cooking. We might ask questions that require a familiarity with farming. Each of these questions would be easy for a minority of test-takers, but could be impossible for the majority.

The test-makers would not complain simply because so few people got the questions correct. They would complain because the results had no CONSISTENCY among the results. Except for the Spanish-speaking farm girl, these three questions would be answered correctly by different minorities in the test-taking group.

Instead, questions with **acceptable DIFFICULTY** are questions which are answered correctly by those **scoring best on the rest of the test.**

In a sense, then, the pre-test is the place where questions with unacceptable difficulty are identified and eliminated. Only those questions which produce results that are consistent with the results of the entire pre-test are retained for scored sections.

For example, if there were one question which rich test-takers got right, but poor test-takers got wrong, and a second question which the poor got right but the rich got wrong, only the first question would be kept. This is because a majority of the test-takers are from upper-income families. It is the **majority of test-takers** which determines the **consistency** of results.

As the following sections will explain, there is a variety of ways to create this biased result. However, the result itself is a natural and inevitable consequence of the test development process. If someone were to insert a question which poor people were supposed to find easy, but rich people find hard, the pre-test would identify this as a question to be discarded. The only chance poor people have is learning how to **avoid test bias** and to **use test bias to raise your score.**

I don't want to be pessimistic about test bias. It is just something that you should confront **now**--not when you are taking the GMAT. A significant aspect of test bias may be the **emotional distraction** caused by biased questions.

I have had people tell me about questions they still remember from their admission tests--over a decade before. I consider these recollections to be based on emotional reactions which these test-takers had during the test. The emotional reactions may have lowered their scores on questions that no one would claim were culturally biased. You can avoid this aspect of test bias by confronting it now, and as you take the published GMAT materials.

## C. HOW TO AVOID TEST BIAS.

The following sections will discuss the specific types of bias likely to be encountered on each GMAT section. You can learn how to avoid these particular types of bias.

In general, the test development process results in biased questions that appear **at the very beginning and the very end** of each section. This is where the **very easy and very hard** questions, respectively, are placed on scored sections. The **difficulty** is simply a reflection of the **number of people** who answered the question correctly on the pre-test.

However, you now know that questions are retained only if they produce **consistent** results. This means that you know the **identity of the people** who get easy questions wrong, or get hard questions right. In stereotyped simplicity, low-income females from minority groups get the easiest questions wrong and high-income males who are white get the hardest questions right. This is not speculation on my part, it is a deduction from the specifications for the test development process and the overall test scores on the GMAT.

You can use this information on the **first five** questions in a section and the **last five** questions on the section. On the early questions, you are asking yourself "Who would get this question wrong?" On the last questions, you are asking yourself "Who would get this question right?" You already have a stereotype for each group. Your task is to translate that stereotype into a thought process on the question. (Remember, everyone is **trying** to get the correct answer.)

On the **first five questions**, only a **few** people are getting the question **wrong**, and they are typically low-income, female, and from a minority group. One common way in which these groups miss an early question is **discarding the correct answer**. They may do this because the answer conflicts with their own background or assumptions.

On the **last five questions**, you are trying to pick the answer that only a **few** test-takers would **pick**. You already know who those test-takers are--the wealthy, white males in the pre-test. If lots of people got the question right, or a different minority got the question right, the question would not be appearing at the end of a section. On these questions, you want to put yourself in the minds of your stereotypical wealthy, white male--something you didn t try to do on the first five questions.

You can follow this process on the Reading Comprehension, Analaysis of Situations, and Sentence Correction sections. You may encounter controversial topics. Pick the answer that sounds like something a wealthy, white male who is politically conservative would say spontaneously.

The main point is that **test bias does NOT affect EVERY question**. The overall gap in the average scores between blacks and whites, for example, could be accounted for by 1 out of 8 questions on the test.

Your task is to identify the questions with the likely bias and to avoid that bias. Don t approach every question as though it were riddled with bias--most of them are not.

## 1. READING COMPREHENSION.

This section is likely to create bias by the **choice of topics** in the passages. Since the questions are arranged in sets following each passage, you will not be able to isolate the five easiest and five hardest questions. However, you will be able to identify the easiest and hardest **question sets**.

### a. "IF TRUE"

This question-type is very likely to involve test bias. You **must** use a 3-step process Steps 1 and 2 are essential to avoiding bias.

**Step 1** requires you to **assume that all options are TRUE.** Very often the correct answer will be one that test-takers from the wrong backgrounds will immediately discard because it does not seem realistic, given their background.

This danger will be greatest **early in the section.** This is because only a few test-takers got this wrong on the pre-test (you know which ones) and they may have gotten it wrong by discarding the correct answer and choosing among four not-very-logical options.

**Step 2** requires you to **decide which options strengthen and which options weaken** the original statement. Rarely will all five options point in the desired direction. Usually at least one will go in the opposite direction, or be irrelevant to the original statement. After you have completed step 2, you should be left with only a few options.

If you don t follow step 2, you are likely to pick an answer that **goes in the wrong direction.** Most of the "IF TRUE" questions ask for answers that "WEAKEN" the original statement. This means that you are constantly being asked to refute the original statement. If you agree with the original statement, you may pick an answer that strengthens it--and you will be wrong. On the other hand, there may be a statement that you disagree with--and you will be asked to "STRENGTHEN" it!

**Step 3** requires you to **choose the answer from the remaining options.** Once you have followed Steps #1 and #2, there will only be a few options remaining. Now it should be easy to pick the one which is "MOST" in the desired direction.

I believe that "IF TRUE" questions are so popular on this section because they operate in the way I have described--they create bias easily. As you encounter each "IF TRUE" question, ask yourself how deeply you care about the controversy in the question. Then ask yourself if you agree with the stereotypical wealthy, white male who is politically conservative.

**a. Passages Involving Mention of Specific Groups.**

Each GMAT section of Reading Comprehension has at least one passage **related to a minority group**. Usually this group will be blacks. You can review the list of topics in Chapter 6 READING COMPREHENSION to see how often various groups have been mentioned in passages. You should try to gauge your reactions if some of the passages appeared on your form of the GMAT. For example, how would you have reacted, if you are black, to the passage about "REDLINING AND BLACK HOUSING"? How would you have reacted to the passage about the "SOUTHERN SLAVERY AND PATERNALISM"?

You will also notice that several topics involved women. Some topics combine the two concerns, such as the passage about "LORRAINE HANSBERRY AND **RAISIN IN THE SUN.**" Finally, some involve topics that are related to class structure, such as the passages about the "SOCIAL MOBILITY AND STATUS POLITICS" and "THE DEPRESSION AND THE NEW DEAL" You should envision your reaction to these types of passages **before** you encounter them on an actual test.

Just because a passage involves your particular group does **not** mean that your group will do well on the questions! The pattern of answers must be the same on all sections and question-types. You must make a particular effort to imagine how wealthy, white males would react to the topic of the passage.

One danger is that you will **discard correct answers** because they do not fit your experience. This is a particular danger when the passage **seems to be trying to describe your experience.** This might occur in an "IF TRUE" question, or others involving inferences or assumptions in the passage. Be careful not to set yourself up as a self-proclaimed expert on the topic--particularly if it is supposed to be about your group.

**b. "ATTITUDE OF THE AUTHOR", "TONE OF THE PASSAGE".**

These questions appear almost exclusively after passages mentioning specific groups. The danger in these questions is that you will **select your own attitudes** rather than the **author's** in answering the question. Or you might state your opinion of the tone of the passage when you should be picking the answer that will be given by wealthy, white males.

You could consider these questions to be little opinion gauges. You will find that you will be selecting wrong answers that are **right next to** the correct answer. For example, if the correct answer is "B", you will be selecting "A" and "C" because these are attractive to you, but turn out to be just a little off the **appropriate opinion.**

**c. "PRIMARY PURPOSE" Questions.**

These questions should have a **simple word** in the front of the correct answer. When these questions follow passages that are controversial for you, there is the danger that you will pick a word that is **too complex**. For example, if you consider a passage to be contrary to your opinions on a subject, you might pick an answer that begins "DISCREDIT" because you consider the author to be bad-mouthing your side of the controversy.

You can avoid this danger by avoiding answers that seem too cynical or extreme. This may be hard when you are trying to pretend that you are a wealthy, white male when you are not one. You may imagine that those individuals have it in for people like yourself. If so, you may characterize the passage as one which actively assaults your opinions and beliefs. Be careful, the test-makers and wealthy, white males probably have a much **simpler** way of explaining the "PRIMARY PURPOSE OF THE PASSAGE."

**d. Sex of the Author, Characters.**

Sometimes the author of a reading passage will be female. In general, this should not be very shocking. However, the topic of the passage may not lead you to assume that the author is a woman. In addition, you may not be told this until one of the **questions** reveals the author's sex--by then it may be a **belated surprise** (or worse yet, confusing).

This does **not necesarily** mean that the author is **really** a woman. The test-makers are very fond of giving unlikely characters a female identity. Throughout the test you may encounter a police officer, doctor, or pilot who is female. This may make the test-makers feel good because they have mentioned a woman, but it may distract or confuse you--especially if you are a woman.

Just as the author need not be a woman to be identified as female, the opinions favored in the answers are not necessarily those typical of those held by women. For example, the passage in test #47, 49 on "THE IMPACT OF HUMAN SEX DIFFERENCES ON SOCIETY" may raise sensitive issues that are resolved in ways that many women would reject.

**2. PROBLEM SOLVING & DATA SUFFICIENCY.**

You may already be aware of the tendency of many women to perform poorly on math sections of stndardized tests. But did you know that this tendency can be attributed to **particular types of questions**?

Research has shown that women would do relatively better on standardized tests of math if there were **more algebra** and **less geometry**.

You can't do anything about the mix of questinos on your GMAT, but you can maximize your chances of earning a high score by **focusing on questions you are likely to answer correctly.**

I have noticed that the **geometry** questions tend to appear **late in the section.** This means that they are among the harder questions.

It may also mean that the difficulty of geometry questions is being affected by the efforts of **women** on these questions. This could be true even for women who are completing a college curriculum with a heavy math orientation, since geometry is unlikely to be part of that curriculum--calculus, algebra, statistics, and even trigonometry are more likely to be among your recent math classes.

You must **decide for yourself** what your proficiency is on various types of math questions. Before you take the GMAT, you can brush up on your weak points after taking the sample sections. When you take the GMAT, you can **skip unfamiliar** questions to give yourself more time on familiar questions. This is better than wasting time on your weaknesses and suffering a penalty for wrong answers.

This does **not** mean that you should avoid guessing. The penalty of 1/4 point for choosing a wrong answer should **balance out to 0** on five guesses--1 for the correct answer and -1/4 for 4 wrong answers. This **does** mean that you are hurting yourself by **wasting time before guessing** on unfamiliar questions.

If you are unsure of your high school geometry, you should not give up completely--the geometry on the GMAT is relatively simple. You may know how to answer these questions without remembering most of what you were taught in high school geometry classes.

### 3. SENTENCE CORRECTION.

This section will include a number of sentences mentioning famous minority group figures, famous women, and controversial social topics.

The danger in this section is that you will focus on the **substance** of the sentence rather than the **grammar** and **diction.** This may be a greater danger in long sentences, where you should simply be **reading from comma to comma.** Or you may feel that a sentence **changes the meaning** of the sentence (such as in a sentence that requires you to change "AS" to "THAN").

Try to read the sentence **without regard to the content** when the sentence involves people or subjects that are sensitive or controversial for you.

**D. EXAMPLES OF POTENTIALLY BIASED QUESTIONS FROM PUBLISHED GMAT MATERIALS.**

Abbreviations Used:

**RC.** These tests are the sample Reading Comprehension sections found in **The Official Guide to GMAT.**

**SC.** These tests are the sample Sentence Correction sections found in **The Official Guide to GMAT.**

All other questions are from the Authentic GMATs contained in **The Official Guide to GMAT.**

**Race.**
RC II 8-17
RC III 1-9
SC I 1, 2, 7, 16
SC II 9, 15
A #1 3, 9, 18, #3 1-8
B #6 8, 17
C #1 8, 22

**Sex.**
RC I 1-8
SC II 4
A #3 17-25
B #2 17-25, #6 6
C #1 13, #3 1-9

**Class.**
RC II 1-7
SC II 5

**Political.**
SC I 23, 24, 25

**Occult.**
RC II 18-25

**E. COMMENTARY ON POTENTIALLY BIASED QUESTIONS IN PUBLISHED GMAT MATERIALS.**

**RC II. 8-17.** If you are black, this is a perfect Reading Comprehension section to practice learning the **appropriate opinions** on the GMAT. There will normally be at least one of the three passages involving a minority group. The group will usually be blacks.

Review the list of topics in Chapter 6 READING COMPREHENSION to see the topics involving various groups. Imagine how you would react if various topics had appeared on your GMAT. It is

important that you avoid **emotional reactions** during the actual GMAT. This will be easier if you are not surprised to see such topics on the GMAT.

As you read this passage and questions, ask yourself whether you already knew about Amiri Baraka; whether you found yourself evaluating the opinions expressed in the passage; whether you felt distracted by the topic. It is important that you **accept the passage's perspective** rather than **substitute your own opinions about the topic or the passage.**

Question #9 is a good example of this. You may disagree with the accuracy of answer "A". However, the question begins "ACCORDING TO THE PASSAGE." You should **re-read the passage** for all such questions. You will find the correct answer in the passage--even if you would personally disagree with the answer!

Questions #10 and #12 both involve **similarities between blacks and whites.** Question #10 asks which characteristic was shared; question #12 has "THE SAME POINT OF VIEW" in the correct answer. This is a **typical value** expressed on the GMAT. The test-makers' world view does **not** emphasize differences between the races. Don't look for a question which emphasizes racial differences. You won't find it!

This may create problems for members of the minority group mentioned in the passage--especially if you consider your group membership to be the cause of **different experiences from those of whites.**

Remember, all GMAT questions must be viewed from the perspective of **wealthy, white males.** Since this was the easiest of the three passages in this section, only a minority of test-takers got these questions wrong. (You already know the characteristics of that minority.)

Question #17 asks for "THE TONE OF THE PASSAGE." This is a typical question after passages including minority groups. Even though you might disagree with the correct answer, you should be able to pick it on the GMAT. Option "C" would never be the correct answer--the test-makers' world view does not include "HOSTILE" attitudes toward minority groups. This would be an **inappropriate opinion** on the GMAT. Options "A", "D" and "E" are too noncommittal or negative to be the correct answer. Option "B" with "COMMENDATORY" is just the pat on the back that the question-writer needs after writing this passage. If you, too, give the question-writer credit for being supportive of a black author, you will get credit on the GMAT!

**RC III. 1-9.** This is another passage about "THE BLACK MOVEMENT IN THE UNITED STATES," but it also mentions a variety of other American and international minority groups. You must read this passage with a perspective that does **not** reflect your own minority experience.

Notice that Question #7 mentions "SIMILARITIES" and should clue you into the correct answer of "B".

Question #8 is a perfect example of how looking for a **simple** word can make "PRIMARY PURPOSE" questions easy.

**SC I 1.** This question is doubly unusual. First, it is about South America. Second, it appeared, **almost verbatim on another GMAT**! Don't be surprised if you think you recognize a question on your form of the GMAT--there aren't that many things the test-makers ask. They just ask them over and over again in slightly different forms.

**SC I 2.** Don't get caught up in the substance of this sentence. **Read from comma to comma** to spot the error. Notice that the unusual phrase "HERSELF AN ESCAPED SLAVE" is **not underlined.** Don't waste time worrying whether it is correct.

**SC I 7.** "REASON...BECAUSE" is a **common error** on this section. The correct answer to this question simply drops "REASON THE" from the sentence. Don't get caught up in the reasons themselves. This is a politically charged assertion--but the GMAT is not the place to waste time evaluating the statement itself.

**RC I 1-8.** This passage is a perfect example of the **appropriate opinions** on the GMAT concerning women in management. Notice that Question #8 is about "THE TONE" of the author. If you are a woman, you can compare your answers with the correct answers by analyzing the values underlying them.

**SC I 23, 24, 25.** The last three questions of this section all involve **environmental pollution.** This may be a coincidence, but it may create distractions for ecological activists, or for women reading #25.

The distraction may be greater since the first of the three statements purports to report a survey of international journalists about the ultimate safety of nuclear power. If you disagree with the "MAJORITY" in that poll, don't be distracted looking for some political slant in the next two questions about the environment. Remember, **concentrate on the grammar** not the politics of these sentences.

**RC II 18-25.** This is a passage that may deal with another minority--those familiar with TM. This is not a definite minority group, such as women taking the GMAT, but it may have a similar impact. Surveys show that women are more likely than men to believe in meditation, astrology and other forms of the occult. Yet belief in the occult is an **inappropriate opinion** on the GMAT.

Knowing this can be helpful in answering Question #23, where the correct answer emphasizes the failures of TM for some people.

If you are familiar with TM, don't let your expertise lead you to pick wrong answers on "ACCORDING TO THE PASSAGE" questions. You should re-read the passage even if you think you know the correct answer independently.

## HERE'S MY THEORY

TESTING FOR THE PUBLIC is interested in hearing **your theory** of how to beat the GMAT. Have you heard a theory that you didn't find in this book? Do you have a hunch that you'd like TESTING FOR THE PUBLIC to research for the next edition?

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Your Trick can be applied to all previous GMATs to see if it works. If it does, it will be included in the next edition of **THE GMAT EXPOSED**. If your theory sounds plausible, but doesn't work on the previous GMATs, future editions can warn test-takers not to follow it.

In any case, your ideas will be valuable additions to the research agenda of TESTING FOR THE PUBLIC.

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